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ABSTRACT

This study identifies several trends related to the performance of Colorado charter schools. In the 1998-99 school year, their performance as a whole on the Colorado Student Assessment Program was stronger than state averages, stronger than sponsoring district averages, and stronger than the average performance of other public schools in the same socioeconomic classification level. The great majority of charter schools were meeting--or exceeding--the performance goals they identified in their individual charter applications and in subsequent school-improvement plans. The market indicators--waiting lists, retention rates, and parent satisfaction--were, as a whole, positive. These charter schools were diverse in size, educational programs, educational philosophies, approach to governance, and assessment strategies. Finally, as a group, the schools were demonstrating increased maturity to measure, track, and report student and school performance data. Appendices list the Colorado Charter Schools Act and supply questionnaire and school profile/data forms. (DFR)

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1998-99 COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS EVALUATION STUDY:

The Characteristics, Status and Performance Record of Colorado Charter Schools

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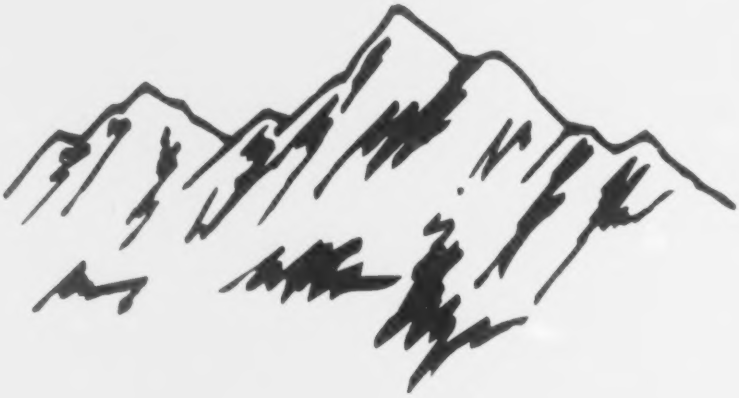

January, 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Colorado Charter Schools Act requires the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to "prepare an annual report and evaluation for the governor and house and senate education committees on the success or failure of charter schools, their relationship to other school reform efforts and suggested changes in state laws necessary to strengthen or change the charter school program."[1]

In addition to expanding the research based on charter schools in Colorado, this study aims to assist interested parties understand better what is -- and what is not -- going well in these schools, and begin to identify what, if anything, other public schools can learn from the approaches and experiences of the charter schools. The implementation of charter schools in Colorado is a developmental process that is still underway, not an event that has been completed. Therefore, both positive trends as well as issues of concern need to be monitored over time, with an emphasis on trying to understand not just whether the charter schools are succeeding, but why.

This study identified several promising trends related to the performance of the charter school in Colorado. These trends are discussed in greater detail later in this executive summary and analyzed at length in the full report. In the 1998-99 school year,

- The performance of charter schools, as a whole, on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) was stronger than state averages, stronger than sponsoring district averages, and stronger than the average performance of other public schools in the same socioeconomic classification level.[2]
- The great majority of charter schools in this study were meeting – or exceeding – the performance goals they identified in their individual charter applications and in subsequent school improvement plans.
- The level of parent participation in charter schools, as a whole, was high.
- The market indicators – waiting lists, retention rates, parent satisfaction – for the charter schools in this study, as a whole, were positive.
- The charter schools were diverse in size, educational programs, educational philosophies, approach to governance and assessment strategies. This diversity met the intent of the Colorado Charter Schools Act to offer new educational options to students and their parents.

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[1] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(5)

[2] The Colorado Department of Education reported CSAP results by the socioeconomic levels of schools, using the percentage of students receiving free or reduced cost lunch as the indicator of socioeconomic status (SES). Four SES levels were identified: Level 1 (0% to 25% receiving free/reduced lunch); Level 2 (26% to 50%) receiving free/reduced lunch); Level 3 (51% to 75% receiving free/reduced lunch); and Level 4 (76% to 100%) receiving free/reduced lunch.

- As a group, the charter schools in this study were demonstrating increased maturity in their ability to measure, track and report student and school performance data.

This study also identified issues of concern that should be monitored in future evaluation studies:

- While the charter schools in this study served a diverse population of students in the 1998-99 school year, the population of charter schools, as a whole, was not as diverse as the population of the state. It appears that part of this discrepancy can be attributed to the failure of some charter schools and/or their authorizing districts to consistently and accurately report data to CDE in accordance with established procedures.

- Eight schools in the study (16%) did not provide sufficient data to enable the evaluator to determine whether they were meeting the expectations defined for their performance. This number includes three schools that did not respond to repeated requests by CDE for data relevant to this study. This conclusion does not necessarily imply that the schools are failing to meet the performance terms of their charter. Indeed, several of the schools in this category recently have had their initial charters renewed by their authorizing districts. It does mean, however, that the schools were not able to produce, or did not feel a responsibility to produce, data that demonstrates such performance. Whether the issue was one of performance or reporting, the lack of data for these schools raises a concern about accountability.

- The Charter School Expansion Act of 1998[3] requires authorizing districts to flow-through specified categories of federal dollars to the charter schools that serve eligible students. The Colorado General Assembly amended the Colorado Charter Schools Act in 1999 to complement these provisions in federal law. Data provided by the charter schools suggest that some authorizing districts were not complying fully with these laws. The data generated for this evaluation study did not support a conclusion about the extent of the districts' noncompliance nor did it suggest possible explanations for their actions. The data were sufficient to indicate the need for follow-up on this issue by the Colorado Department of Education.

Evaluation Model

This evaluation study covers the 51 schools that had been open for at least two years as of the end of the 1998-99 school year. The study does not include schools in their first year of operation in order to give the schools adequate time to establish a performance baseline from which to measure their progress. Of the 51 schools included in this study, two opened in fall of 1993, 11 opened in fall of 1994, 10 opened in fall of 1995, nine opened in fall of 1996, 18 opened in fall of 1997 and one opened in January 1998.

The charter schools in the study, in alphabetical order by their authorizing districts, are:

- The Classical Academy (Academy School District 20)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 School District)
- Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 School District)

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[3] P.L. 105-278.

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- Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett School District, Byers School District, Strasburg School District and Deer Creek School District)
- Boulder Preparatory School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge Academy (Canon City School District)
- Cherry Creek Charter Academy (Cherry Creek School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter School (Cheyenne Mountain School District 12)
- CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- GLOBE Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Roosevelt-Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools)
- P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District)
- Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- DSC Montessori School (Douglas County School District)
- Platte River Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Community of Learners Charter School (Durango School District 9-R)
- EXCEL School (Durango School District 9-R)
- Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)
- Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District)
- Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Junior High (Jefferson County School District)
- Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District)
- Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)
- Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District)
- Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez School District)
- Lake George - Guffey Charter School (Park School District)
- Liberty Common School (Poudre School District)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60)
- Youth and Family Academy Charter School (Pueblo District 60)
- Connect Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)
- Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 70)
- Aspen/Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District)
- Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District)
- Frontier Academy Charter School (Weld County School District 6)

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- Union Colony Charter School (Weld County School District 6)
- Crown Pointe Academy of Westminster (Westminster School District 50)

This evaluation study rests on a paper review of student achievement and school performance data regularly maintained by the charter schools and produced for this study. The evaluation did not involve site visits to the schools and did not require supplemental data collection on their part. This evaluation approach is consistent with the Colorado charter school model, which places accountability for charter schools squarely with their authorizing districts, and not with the state. However, it has limitations. There are effective and promising practices going on in individual charter schools that cannot be captured by an evaluation of this sort. Similarly, there may be significant issues of concerns in individual charter schools that are not identified through a paper review.

The data analyzed in this study was obtained from the following sources:

- Charter school administrators completed a data matrix/school profile form to provide 1998-99 information on the school's educational program, budget, governance, student population and student achievement and school performance measures.

- Charter school administrators completed the 1999 Charter Schools Evaluation Study Questionnaire.[4] This instrument was designed to elicit qualitative data on diverse issues of interest to the Colorado Department of Education, including the delivery of services to students with disabilities, parent involvement, technical assistance needs, lessons learned and effective practice.

- Charter applications, charter contracts, waiver requests, school improvement plans, annual reports and other documentation on file at the Colorado Department of Education provided information about waiver requests, school programs, school performance goals, governance and student and school performance.

- The database at the Colorado Department of Education provided data regarding student enrollment, school demographics, and suspension and expulsion rates.

Of the 51 schools covered by the scope of this study, 48 schools returned completed evaluation materials to CDE. Their responses were not complete in all cases. Therefore, the size of the sample for particular issues varies from 42 schools to 51 schools, depending on the source of data and the response rate of the schools.

Characteristics Of Colorado Charter Schools

It is useful to talk in terms of averages and trends in order to paint a picture of the Colorado charter schools, their work and their record of achievement. It is important to remember, however, that the charter schools are a diverse lot. The range of experience among the charter schools in this study -- with regard to nearly every issue discussed in this report -- was as broad as the differences that existed between charter schools and their public school counterparts.

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[4] The Questionnaire can be found in the Appendix to the full report.

Total Enrollment: The 51 charter schools in this study served 12,972 students during the 1998-99 school year. The charter schools in the study represented 3.3% of Colorado's schools and 1.9% of the state's student population.

School Size: The average 1998-99 enrollment of the charter schools in this study was 245 students. The median enrollment was 192 students. The number of students enrolled ranged from 895 students in Roosevelt Edison Charter School (El Paso District 11) to eight students in Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts).

Of the 51 schools for which 1998-99 data on student enrollment was available:

- 14% (seven schools) served under 100 students,
- 37% (19 schools) served between 101 and 200 students,
- 20% (10 schools) served between 201 and 300 students,
- 23% (12 schools) served between 301 and 500 students, and
- 6% (three schools) served over 500 students.

Student to Teacher Ratio: Colorado Department of Education data related to student-to-teacher ratios for the 1998-99 school year was not collected by CDE because of the Automated Data Collection Project was being piloted. Applying the most recent data available (1997-98), the average student-teacher ratio of the charter schools in this study was 19.7. The median student-teacher ratio was 19.3. The student-teacher ratios for charter schools in this study ranged from 38.1 at Community Prep Charter School (El Paso District 11) to 6.5 at the Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District).

Of the 45 schools for which 1997-98 data related student-to-teacher ratio was available:

- 27% (12 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 16.0 or under,
- 33% (15 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 16.1 to 21.0,
- 27% (12 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 21.1 to 25.0, and
- 13% (six schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 25.1 or over.

Grade Levels: Less than a third of the charter schools in this study (16 schools, 31%) fit the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools. Most of the schools offered a program that served students continuously from elementary through middle school, from middle school through secondary school, or throughout their public school experience. Well over half (33 schools, 65%) of the schools served elementary or elementary and middle school students.

Source Of Students Enrolled: Of the 51 charter schools in this study, only about half maintained data related to whether their students were previously enrolled in home schools, in private schools or in another public schools. Among those schools that tracked this information, there was a broad variation of results depending on their size and location. The data as a whole confirmed that charter schools brought students into the public education system who otherwise would have been pursuing private, home-school or other options. However, the data was not specific enough to support a conclusion about the total number of these students.

Educational Programs: The charter schools in this study offered a diverse array of education programs and instructional approaches. Thirty-one of the 51 schools (61%) used a recognized national reform model as the foundation of their educational program. These reform models included: *Core Knowledge* - 22 schools; *Paideia* - three schools; *Montessori* - two schools;

Modern Red Schoolhouse - one school; *William Glasser's Quality School Network* - one school; *The Coalition of Essential Schools* - one school; and *The National Edison Project* - one school. The remainder of the schools offered educational programs that combined various reform models and practices. While subsets of this remainder shared common practices and characteristics, they could not be grouped into identifiable categories for purposes of comparing the relative performance of different reform models or approaches.

The cohort of charter schools using the Core Knowledge reform model was notable both for its size (representing 42% of all schools in this study) and for its dominance as a reform model used by charter schools (22 schools versus three schools for the reform model used by the second highest number of schools). The study presents student and school performance data for the Core Knowledge schools and Paideia schools as cohort groups. Results for the other reform models were not summarized because they involved so few schools that the performance of the reform model could easily be tracked directly through the affiliated school(s).

The Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities: As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student who lives within the authorizing school district, and must provide appropriate special education services as needed by students with disabilities. Of the 42 schools that provided information about the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities,

- 9.5% (four schools) assumed total responsibility for special education services.
- 16.5% (seven schools) paid their authorizing districts to assume total responsibility for special education services in their schools.
- 74% (31 schools) shared responsibility for special education services with their authorizing districts.

Schools in each of the three categories expressed their belief that the approach they used was effective both in terms of cost and quality of services. These responses suggested that there was no single best approach to serving students with disabilities in charter schools. It was important for each charter school to have the flexibility to weigh the pros and cons of the delivery options, depending on its size, location, student population, finances, relationship with the authorizing district and other factors. Each charter schools balanced its desire for autonomy against the advantages of collaboration (primarily access to the expertise and economies of scale of the authorizing district) and balanced its tolerance for risk against the cost of "insuring," through collaboration with the authorizing district, against the very high costs of serving students with severe needs.

The Students Served by Colorado Charter Schools

As described in more detail in the following sections, the charter schools in this study served a population of students in 1998-99 that was diverse, but not as diverse as the population served by public schools overall.

Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch: The 51 charter schools in this study served 2,519 students in 1998-99 who were eligible for free/reduced lunch, representing 19.4% of the total enrollment (12,972) of the schools. The state average was 27.7%. The percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% at several schools to 87.4% at Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools).

Twenty nine schools (57%) served a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students than their authorizing districts. Fifteen schools in the study (31%) served approximately (plus or minus five percentage points) the same percentage of racial/ethnic minority students as their authorizing districts. Another six schools (12%) served a greater percentage.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Students: The 52 charter schools in this study served 2,599 racial/ethnic minority students in 1998-99, representing 20% of the schools' total enrollment (12,972). The state average was 29.4%. The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% (Marble Charter School, Gunnison Watershed School District) to 97.4% (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools).

Twenty-three schools in the study (45%) served approximately (plus or minus five percentage points) the same percentage of racial/ethnic minority students as their authorizing districts. Another six schools (12%) served a greater percentage than their authorizing districts. The remaining 22 schools (43%) served a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students than their authorizing districts.

Students with Disabilities: The 51 charter schools in this study served 868 students with disabilities, representing 6.7% of the schools' total enrollment (12,972). The state average was 10.2%.

The percentage of students with disabilities served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% (Prairie Creeks Charter School, Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts, Lincoln Academy, Jefferson County School District, Crestone Charter School, Moffat Consolidated School District; and Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences, Pueblo School District 60) to 100% (Magnet School for the Deaf, Jefferson County School District).

Thirty two schools in the study (60%) served a smaller percentage of students with disabilities than their authorizing districts. Ten schools (20%) served approximately (plus or minus two percentage points) the same percentage of students with disabilities as their authorizing districts. Another eight schools in the study (16%) served a greater percentage than their authorizing districts.

These data highlight an issue that should be closely monitored in future charter schools evaluations, but they should be read with some caution. In instances where a charter school did not forward demographic information (through its authorizing district) to CDE, the database shows "0%." The failure of charter schools and/or their authorizing districts to consistently report these data may have skewed the demographic profile of charter schools as a whole. Second, the total number of charter school students in the study was small compared to the 1998-99 student enrollment in all public schools (representing approximately 1.9% of the total student population). The percentages among categories could therefore change significantly with only slight alterations in the composition of student enrollment.

Charter School Staff, Administration and Governing Boards

Governing Boards: Almost all charter schools in the study employed an administrator (sometimes called a dean, educational director or lead teacher instead of a principal) who was responsible for making day-to-day operational decisions. Of the 47 schools that provided information about the composition of their governing boards in 1998-99,

- 38% (18 schools) had a governing board comprised of parents, school staff and community members,
- 28% (12 schools) had a board comprised of parents only,
- 21% (10 schools) had a board comprised of parents and school staff,
- 4% (two schools) had a board comprised of parents and community members,
- 2% (one schools) had a board comprised of teachers only, and
- 9% (four schools) were governed by a body other than a school-based governing board.

Parents held a majority on the governing boards in 34 of the 47 charter schools (72%) in this study.

Administrator Tenure: Administrator stability contributes to school effectiveness, but has been a challenge for many charter schools in Colorado and in the nation to achieve. The average tenure of charter school lead administrators was calculated by dividing the number of years the school had been in operation by the total number of lead administrators employed by the school.

The average tenure of lead administrators for the charter schools in this study was 2.2 years. The median tenure was 1.67 years. Of the 46 schools that provided 1998-99 data related to administrator tenure:

- 13% (six schools) had an average administrator tenure of four to five years,
- 15% (seven schools) had an average administrator tenure of three years,
- 22% (ten schools) had an average administrator tenure of 2.0 to 2.9 years,
- 39% (18 schools) had an average administrator tenure of 1.0 to 1.9 years, and
- 11% (five schools) had average administrator tenure of less than one year.

Teacher Salaries, Education and Experience: 1998-99 data for charter school teacher salaries, educational attainment (expressed as the percentage of teachers who have obtained Masters' Degrees) and experience was not collected by CDE because the Automated Data Collection Project was being piloted. In past evaluation studies, the average salaries, experience and educational attainment of charter school teachers were consistently less than state averages.

Administrator Salaries: The salaries of the charter school administrators in this study ranged from $27,400 at Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Trail School Districts) to $80,000 at Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District). The average 1998-99 salary for charter school administrators was $50,500 and the median salary was $55,000.

Of the 46 schools that provided data related to administrator salary:

- 7% of charter school administrators (3 schools) had annual salaries of less than $30,000,
- 13% (6 schools) had salaries of between $31,000 and $40,000,
- 28% (13 schools) had salaries of between $41,000 and $50,000,
- 22% (ten schools) had salaries of between $51,000 and $60,000,
- 22% (ten schools) had salaries of between $61,000 and $70,000, and
- 9% (four schools) had annual salaries of over $70,000.

Administrator Experience: Lead administrator experience ranged from no prior educational experience at Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District) to 33 years of educational experience at Lake George-Guffey Charter School (Park School District). Lead administrators of charter schools in this study had an average of 11 years of experience in the field of education (in private, public or charter schools). The median lead administrator experience was eight years.

Of the 46 schools that provided data related to this issue.

- 22% of charter school administrators (10 schools) had less than three years experience.
- 41% of charter school administrators (19 schools) had between four and ten years of experience.
- 22% of charter school administrators (11 schools) had between 11 and 20 years of experience.
- 11% of charter school administrators (five schools) had between 21 and 30 years of experience.
- 4% of charter school administrators (two schools) had over 30 years of experience.

Effective Practices in Governance and Administration: The full evaluation report includes a discussion of effective charter school practices in governance and administration. The charter schools in this study emphasized the importance of:

- The clear delineation of authority between the board and the administration and a mutual respect for the other's role.
- The quality of the administrator.
- The make-up of the governing board, in terms of overall composition and the expertise and backgrounds of the particular individuals who served on the board.
- Stable leadership at both the administrator and governing board level.
- The existence of written policies and procedures, and well-defined protocols for governing board meetings.

Parent Involvement in Charter Schools

Parent Participation in the Schools: The full evaluation study presents data related to the total number of volunteer hours contributed by parents/families during the 1998-99 school year and the approximate percentage of parents who participate. These data are difficult to summarize because the total number of hours contributed is only informative in the context of the schools' enrollment. It is fair to conclude, however, that the charter schools, as a whole, enjoy striking (sometimes extraordinary) levels of parent involvement. This is not to say that all charter school parents can and want to participate. But many do and at high levels of responsibility and commitment.

Parent Surveys: Of the 47 schools that provided information related to this issue, 43 (84%) administered a parent satisfaction survey on at least an annual basis. These surveys had the potential to contribute to accountability in at least two ways. First, they provided useful feedback to the schools from parents on a regular basis. Second, they offered an important source of information that potential patrons of a charter school could review as one measure of the school's effectiveness.

Parent Contracts: Of the 47 schools that provided information related to use of parent contracts, 17 schools (37%) required a parent contract in 1998-99, and 29 schools (63%) did not. These contracts generally spelled out the school's expectations of parents related to their involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Why Charter School Parents Participate: The implications of creating new ways to engage parents are significant. Research has shown that parental involvement has a profound effect on student achievement. Students whose parents are involved in their education are more enthusiastic and confident learners and achieve at higher levels. Similarly, schools where parents are involved are more effective at meeting the needs of all students. The questionnaire for the 1999 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study sought qualitative data from charter school directors related to the degree and depth of parent involvement in their schools.

The respondents identified two major factors that contributed to high levels of involvement by charter school parents as a group. First was the notion that because parents engaged in a search to define the best educational setting for their children and sought out the particular school, they had a greater level of commitment to the school and its success. A related factor, but distinct from the first, was the idea that parents participated more in charter schools because the were ample and diverse opportunities for involvement and parents felt that what they did made a difference in the education of their children. The respondents also identified effective strategies for promoting parent involvement, which are presenting in the full evaluation report

School Discipline

Student Discipline Codes: Of the 46 schools that provided information about their discipline code, 21 schools (46%) had adopted a discipline code different than the one used in their authorizing districts. The remaining 25 schools (54%) applied the discipline code of the authorizing district.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate: Student suspension and expulsion rates are the most commonly used indicators of a safe learning environment. The Colorado Department of Education database for the 1998-99 school year included suspension and expulsion data for 40 of the 51 schools in this study. The 1998-99 suspension rates for schools in this study ranged from 46.3% at Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) to 0% at many schools. Twenty four schools (60%) had a suspension rate that was equal to or less than the suspension rate for their authorizing districts. The average 1998-99 suspension rate of schools in the study was 8.5%. The median suspension rate was 4.4%.

Of the 40 schools for which data on suspension rates were available:

- 15% (six schools) had a suspension rate of less than 1 %,
- 43% (17 schools) had a suspension rate of 1.1% to 5.0%,
- 18% (seven schools) had a suspension rate of 5.1% to 10.0%,
- 12% (five schools) had a suspension rate of 10.1% to 15%, and
- 12% (five schools) had a suspension rate of over 15%.

The 1998-99 expulsion rates for schools in this study ranged from 14.3% at Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts) to 0% at the majority of the schools. Of the 40 schools reporting data, 34 schools (85%) had an expulsion rate that was equal to or less than the suspension rate for their authorizing districts. The average 1998-99 expulsion rate of the charter schools in the study was 0.5%. The median expulsion rate was 0%. Of the 40 schools for which data on expulsion rates were available:

- 80% (32 schools) had an expulsion rate of 0%.
- 8% (three schools) had an expulsion rate of less than 1%
- 10% (four schools) had an expulsion rate of 1.1% to 2.0
- 2% (one school) had an expulsion rate of over 2%

Student Achievement, School Performance and Accountability

At the core of the Colorado Charter Schools Act are two central goals: to provide charter schools with significant autonomy in order to promote innovation and effective practices and to hold the charter schools accountable for the results they achieve. These goals are in direct tension when it comes to *state-level* efforts to evaluate the progress of charter schools as a whole, especially in any comparative way. In short, the diversity and autonomy that the Charter Schools Act was intended to promote is incompatible with the standardization required to support direct comparisons.

To balance the need for accountability against the autonomy that schools should be – and were – exercising under the Act, this study took a multidimensional approach to evaluating the performance of the charter schools and the achievement of charter school students. The study discusses the performance of Colorado charter schools and their students during the 1998-99 school year using five different indicators:

1. The Charter Schools' Performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is a statewide assessment, aligned with the state model content standards, that covers limited grades and subjects each year. The state assessment program began in April 1997, testing all fourth grade students in reading and writing. In spring 1998, fourth grade reading and writing was tested again and third grade reading comprehension was added. Tests in seventh grade reading and writing were administered for the first time in spring 1999.

Spring 1999 CSAP results were available for 39 of the 51 charter schools in this study. Five of the charter schools in this study did not participate in the 1999 CSAP because they did not serve students in the 3rd, 4th or 7th grade. Another seven charter schools in this evaluation study administered the CSAP but cannot report their results. As a matter of policy, CDE does not report the results for schools in which 16 or fewer students took the test, out of concern that scores might be identifiable to individual students.

The charter schools in this study, as a whole, outperformed both the state and their authorizing districts. The charter schools also outperformed other public schools with student populations of the same general socioeconomic level. A breakdown of these comparisons follows for each CSAP test administered.

3^{RD} GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 29

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 77% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 67%.

Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Horizons K-8 Alternative School, Boulder Valley School District)
Low: 9% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 76% (22 of 29 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 79% (23 of 29 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 62% (18 of 29 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge schools that administered this assessment, 16 exceeded the state average, 18 exceeded the authorizing district average, and 13 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, one exceeded the authorizing district average, and two exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

4^{th} GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 73% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 59%.

Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Stargate Charter School, Adams 12 School District)
Low: 8% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 82% (23 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 68% (19 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge schools that administered this assessment, 17 exceeded the state average, 18 exceeded the authorizing district average, and 17 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, none exceeded the authorizing district average, and one exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

4^{th} GRADE WRITING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 49% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 34%.

Range: High: 79% proficient or above (Liberty Common School, Poudre School District)
Low: 0% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 71% (20 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 75% (21 of 28 schools)
Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge schools that administered this assessment, 15 exceeded the state average, 16 exceeded the authorizing district average, and 15 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.
Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, none exceeded the authorizing district average, and one exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

7th GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28
Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 66% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 56%.
Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Cheyenne Mountain Charter School, Cheyenne Mountain School District
Low: 6% proficient or above (Youth and Family Academy, Pueblo School District 60)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 61% (17 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 61% (17 of 28 schools)
Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 17 Core Knowledge schools that administered this assessment, ten exceeded the state average, nine exceeded the authorizing district average, and nine exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.
Paideia Cohort: The one Paideia school that administered this assessment met the state average, exceeded the authorizing district average, and exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

7th GRADE WRITING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28
Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 57% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 41%.
Range: High: 96% proficient or above (Cheyenne Mountain Charter School, Cheyenne Mountain School District)
Low: 0% proficient or above (Youth and Family Academy, Pueblo School District 60)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 68% (19 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)
Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 68% (19 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 17 Core Knowledge schools that administered this assessment, 13 exceeded the state average, 13 exceeded the authorizing district average, and 12 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.
Paideia Cohort: The one Paideia school that administered this assessment exceeded the state average, exceeded the authorizing district average, and exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

2. Charter School Participation in Schools of Excellence/Challenger Schools Program

These designations are the only statutory, statewide recognition program of Colorado schools by the Colorado Department of Education. Every public school is eligible to apply. The 51 charter schools in this study represented 3.2 % of the total number of public schools in the state of Colorado. Yet, they represented 21% of the Colorado Schools of Excellence and 50% of the Commissioner's Challenger Schools for 1998-99.

3. Market-Based Indicators

As schools of choice, charter schools also can be measured by market-based indicators, such as the demand for the school (waiting lists), parent involvement and satisfaction, and re-enrollment rates. Specific data related to these indicators are reported as part of the individual school profiles. Based on information provided by 47 of the 51 schools in this evaluation study:

- None of the schools experienced enrollment levels under planned capacity in 1998-99. The great majority of schools had waiting lists, in some cases, very extensive ones.
- Parent satisfaction and teacher satisfaction were reported at generally high levels.
- While a few schools struggled to maintain stable enrollment, the majority of schools came close to or exceeded their goals for re-enrollment. Alpine Charter School, which closed in fall of 1999 due to declining enrollment, was the exception to this rule.

4. Charter Renewals/Closures

Under the Colorado Charter Schools Act, the renewal process is the ultimate tool of accountability. A charter renewal signals the satisfaction of the authorizing district that the charter school is making good on the commitments spelled out in the charter agreement.

Forty-five of the 51 schools in this study provided information about their renewal status. Of this total, 21 schools already have sought a renewal of their charter contract by the authorizing district. All of these schools successfully completed the renewal process. In all but one instance, the term of the charter renewal was equal to or greater than the original term of the charter. The exception, Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District), was originally awarded a three-year charter. Its charter subsequently was renewed for one year. Upon further review by the authorizing district, the school's charter was renewed for a five-year term, with an audit in the third year.

In the nearly six years of the Colorado Charter Schools Act's operation, only two charter schools have closed, both voluntarily. The Clayton Charter School (Denver Public Schools) closed at the end of the 1996-97 school year after three years of operation. The discontinuation of the school was prompted by the decision of the Denver Public Schools to establish its own charter school in the same service area. In October 1999, the Alpine Charter School (Summit School District) closed as a result of declining enrollment and amid concerns about its performance in the context of a scheduled renewal process.

5. The Performance of Individual Charter Schools Measured Against their Own Performance Goals

The Charter Schools Act requires a charter school application to articulate the school's performance goals for students and measurable objectives for student growth. The Act also requires the application to spell out the methods that the school will use to assess and report on student progress. As charter schools begin operation, they refine and update the performance goals contained in their charters through the annual school improvement planning process required of all public schools under Colorado law.

Because diverse authorizing districts, and not a single chartering organization, have the discretion in Colorado to grant charters, the content and specificity of the performance goals set by the charter schools in this study varied broadly. Some were specific and measurable; others were more general and visionary. All met the approval, however, of the particular authorizing district.

Given the fact that charter schools have unique performance goals and different approaches to measuring progress toward these goals, the evaluation study presents school performance data for each school individually. To do this, the report includes a two-page School Profile for each charter school. The first page of the profile provides demographic data, the school's mission, educational approach, governance structure and performance goals. The second page summarizes the student assessment results and data on other performance indicators collected by the school over a period of several years.

Conclusions Regarding Student and School Performance in Colorado Charter Schools

The diversity of the schools in this evaluation study made comparative analyses of their performance problematic. However, the Colorado Department of Education was interested in an overall conclusion of the schools' progress, both as a group and individually. To generate such a conclusion, the evaluator considered performance data related to all five of the measures described above, in the context of the achievement levels of the authorizing district and the population served by the schools. By its nature, this process is somewhat subjective; it does not offer the precision of a mathematical computation. Moreover, this judgment rests solely on a paper review of charter school performance. The evaluation did not involve site visits to the charter schools or the administration of any independent assessments.

As the new state accreditation law is fully implemented, it will provide a common set of objective criteria by which to assess the performance of charter schools on a comparative basis. For the 1998-99 school year covered by this study, however, the only available performance benchmarks were the goals set by the schools themselves and the results of the CSAP assessments.

On the basis of the review just described, the study offers these conclusions about charter school performance for the 1998-99 school year:

Seventeen schools in the study (33%) provided data that indicated they were exceeding the expectations defined for their performance:

- Classical Academy (Academy School District 20)
- Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge (Canon City School District)
- Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Platte River Academy Charter (Douglas County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Junior High School (Jefferson County School District)
- Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)
- Liberty Charter School (Poudre School District)
- Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 70)
- Crown Pointe Charter School (Westminster School District 50)

Twenty six schools (51%) provided data that generally indicated they were meeting expectations defined for their performance:

- Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 School District)
- Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts)
- Roosevelt Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)
- Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District)
- DSC Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Eagle Charter School (Eagle County School District)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)
- Community of Learners (Durango School District 9-R)
- EXCEL School (Durango School District 9-R)
- Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Montessori Peaks Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District)
- Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortex School District)
- Lake George - Guffey Charter School (Park School District)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60)
- Connect Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)
- Aspen - Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District)
- Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District)

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- Frontier Academy Charter School (Weld School District 6)
- Union Colony Charter School (Weld School District 6)

Eight schools (16%) did not provide sufficient data to indicate whether they were meeting the expectations defined for their performance. This total includes three schools that chose not to participate in the evaluation. This is not to say necessarily that these schools are not performing according to the terms of their charter contracts; but that the schools have not produced data for this evaluation study that demonstrates such performance:

- Boulder Preparatory Academy (Boulder Valley School District)
- CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) - Did not complete evaluation materials
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- GLOBE (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools) - Did not complete evaluation materials
- Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District)
- Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District)
- Youth and Family Academy (Pueblo School District 60) - Did not complete evaluation materials

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 22 Core Knowledge charter schools in this study, 14 of the schools exceeded the expectations set for their performance (representing 14 of the 17 schools in the category). The remaining eight generally met expectations defined for their performance (representing eight of the 26 schools in that category).
Paideia Cohort: Of the three Paideia charter schools in this study, two generally met the expectations defined for their performance (representing two of the 26 schools in that category) and one did not provide sufficient data to indicate whether it was meeting performance expectations (representing one of the eight schools in that category).

Use of Waivers By Charter Schools

The Colorado Charter Schools Act does not provide an automatic exemption – often referred to as a "superwaiver" -- from most state laws or regulations. Instead, the law extends to charter schools the operation of the same waiver provision that has been available to every public school district in Colorado since 1989.

Forty-nine of the 51 charter schools in this study (96%) charter schools sought at least one waiver of state law or regulations. Forty-eight of the schools (94%) pursued multiple waivers. There is a definite pattern of waiver requests among the charter schools, despite the range of educational programs they offered.

- 88% (45 schools) received a waiver from the operation of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-101 et seq.
- 86% (44 schools) received a waiver from the operation of the Certificated Performance Evaluation Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-9-106, or enumerated subsections of the Act.
- 84% (43 schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-126, which addresses the employment and authority of principals.
- 67% (34 schools) received waivers of specific subsections of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110, which enumerates the specific powers of local boards of education.
- 55% (28 schools) received waivers of specific subsections of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109, which enumerates the specific duties of local boards of education.

- 27% (14 schools) received a waiver of specified sections of the compulsory school attendance law, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-104.
- 20% (10 schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-105, which sets out the requirements for suspension and expulsion of students.
- 18% (nine schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110 (2.3), which gives local boards of education the power to adopt student conduct and discipline codes.
- 14% (seven schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.7, which sets out specific duties that local boards of education must follow in employing personnel.
- 14% (seven schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.9, which sets out specific duties that local boards of education must follow in requiring certificated personnel to submit fingerprints under specified circumstances.
- 14% (seven schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 32-32-119, which states that a board of education may establish and maintain kindergartens for the instruction of children one year prior to their admission to the first grade.
- 8% (four schools) received a waiver of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-120, which relates to the authority of a local board of education to establish, maintain, equip and operate a food-service facility.
- 6% (three schools) received a waiver of subsections of the Colorado Charter Schools Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104 and 112(1), relating to the location of charter schools and the financing of charter schools.

The charter schools, as a whole, take far greater advantage of the wavier provision in state law than do their public school counterparts. There are several explanations for the expansive use of the waiver law by charter schools. The first explanation is a practical one: as schools of choice, it is easier for charter schools to obtain the concurrences required by the waiver statute. Another explanation is that the budget constraints facing charter schools force them to do business in a different way. Their ability to structure employee compensation outside the normal salary schedule of the authorizing district is essential to the financial viability of many charter schools. A third explanation is philosophical. In order to implement a distinctive educational program, the great majority of charter schools have attempted to establish considerable autonomy from their authorizing districts in matters related to personnel, governance and educational approach (e.g. testing, curriculum, instruction, discipline code, professional development activities).

Charter School Finance Issues

Charter School Funding: The Colorado Charter Schools Act provides that charter schools and their authorizing districts "shall agree to funding and on any services to be provided by the school district to the charter school." For the period covered by this study (1998-99), the Act required that the funding negotiated "cannot be less than eighty percent of the district per pupil operating revenues (PPOR) multiplied by the number of pupils enrolled in the charter school." **PPOR** is the funding for a district that represents the financial base of support for public education in that district, divided by the district's funded pupil count, minus the minimum amount of funds required to be transferred to the capital reserve fund, the insurance fund or any other fund for the management of risk-related activities. (In 1999, the Colorado General Assembly amended the funding provisions of the Colorado Charter Schools Act. Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, the funding rate negotiated between charter schools and their authorizing districts must be a minimum of 95% of the PPR. The PPR is derived by dividing the district's total program as calculated under the School Finance Act by the district's total funded pupil count for that year.

Forty six of the 51 charter schools in this study provided information about funding in the 1998-99 school year. Of this total:

- 13% (six schools) were funded at a rate of 80% or less of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 27% (12 schools) were funded at a rate of 81% to 85% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 15% (seven schools) were funded at a rate of 86% to 91% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 7% (three schools) were funded at a rate of 95% to 99% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 40% (18 schools) were funded at a rate of 100% of the authorizing district's PPOR.

Purchase of Services by Charter Schools: The Colorado Charter Schools Act allows a charter school to purchase services in three ways: to contract with the authorizing district for the direct purchase of district services, to "purchase" district services out of the central administration overhead cost negotiated between the school and the authorizing districts, and to purchase services from third parties. Forty-five of the 51 charter schools in this study provided information regarding their purchasing patterns. The results, presented in the full report vary from service category (e.g. transportation, student assessment, legal, insurance) to service category without a noticeable pattern.

Charter School Facilities: The 51 charter schools in this study were located in a wide variety of facilities during the 1998-99 school year, including museums, churches, warehouses, grocery stories, strip malls, modular buildings, industrial space and others. Thirty two of the 51 schools (63%) paid rent for their facilities. The remaining nineteen schools (37%) used a donated facility or a facility owned by the authorizing district.

The Colorado Department of Education released a study on charter school capital finance in January 2000. The study described the types of facilities being used by Colorado Charter Schools, assessed the quality of the facilities and discussed the financial arrangements for the use of these facilities. The study -- *Colorado Charter Schools Capital Finance Study: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future* -- is available on the CDE website – http://www.cde.state.co.us.

Federal Start-Up and Dissemination Grants: The Colorado Department of Education awarded start-up grants totaling $2,849,990 to Colorado charter schools in the 1998-99 school year. Grants were made for a three-year period, subject to annual review. The grants program addressed the following priorities:

- Increasing student achievement as measured by the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).
- Increasing participation of low income and at-risk students enrolled in charter schools through the ongoing development of partnerships with various community and charter advocacy organizations.
- Developing additional networking and professional development opportunities for charter school developers, operators, teachers and governing board members.
- Providing assistance to bring leased facilities up to code.
- Creating accountability systems in charter schools.
- Promoting deregulation for charter schools through waivers from inhibiting state laws, rules and regulations.

Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, the Colorado Department of Education also will award dissemination grants to charter schools on a competitive basis. These grants will focus on helping charter schools collaborate with one other and share their work with a broader audience.

Flow-Through of Federal and State Funds by Authorizing Districts. The Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 requires authorizing districts to flow-through specified categories of federal dollars to the charter schools that serve students who are eligible for the categorical aid. The Colorado General Assembly amended the Colorado Charter Schools Act in 1999 to complement federal law. The responses of charter school administrators to the 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study Questionnaire suggest that some authorizing districts are not in full compliance with the provisions of these laws. The data generated for this evaluation study did not support a conclusion about the extent of the districts' noncompliance nor did it suggest possible explanations for their actions. The data did indicate, however, a need for follow-up on the part of the Colorado Department of Education.

Lessons Learned by The Charter Schools and Ongoing Technical Assistance Needs

The full report presents the responses of charter school administrators to the 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study Questionnaire related to lessons learned and ongoing technical assistance needs. The lessons most frequently cited by the respondents concerned the quality of planning, staying on mission, and delineating clear lines of responsibility between the governing board and school staff and administration. The major technical assistance needs of the charter schools in this study related to technology access and assistance in integrating technology into the teaching and learning process. The full report is available on the Colorado Department of Education website at www.cde.state.co.us.

PART I - INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Charter Schools Act requires the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to "prepare an annual report and evaluation for the governor and house and senate education committees on the success or failure of charter schools, their relationship to other school reform efforts and suggested changes in state laws necessary to strengthen or change the charter school program."[1]

This Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study responds to this mandate, by reporting and analyzing data for the 1998-99 school year related to:

- The characteristics of charter schools, their students and teachers
- The governance of charter schools
- Parent participation in charter schools
- Student achievement and school performance
- Waivers of state law granted to charter schools
- Funding of charter schools and the parties from whom charter schools obtain needed services
- Lessons learned by charter schools
- Ongoing technical assistance needs of charter schools.

As of the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, 69 charters had been approved in Colorado and 64 charter schools were operating with a combined enrollment of 17,672 students. This figure represents 2.5% of the total public school enrollment. Of the 36 states with charter school legislation, only Arizona has a higher percentage of students enrolled in charter schools.[2]

This evaluation study covers a subset of the total number of charter schools presently in operation: those 51 schools that had been open for at least two years as of the end of the 1998-99 school year. The study does not include schools in their first year of operation in order to give the schools adequate time to establish a performance baseline from which to measure their progress.

Charter Schools Included in the 1998-99 Evaluation Study

Of the 51 schools included in this study, two opened in fall of 1993, 11 opened in fall of 1994, 10 opened in fall of 1995, nine opened in fall of 1996, 18 opened in fall of 1997 and one opened in January 1998.

The charter schools in the study, in alphabetical order by their authorizing districts, are:

- The Classical Academy (Academy School District 20)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 School District)
- Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett School District, Byers School District, Strasburg School District and Deer Creek School District)
- Boulder Preparatory School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)

- Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge Academy (Canon City School District)
- Cherry Creek Charter Academy (Cherry Creek School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter School (Cheyenne Mountain School District 12)
- CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- GLOBE Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Roosevelt-Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools)
- P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District)
- Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- DSC Montessori School (Douglas County School District)
- Platte River Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Community of Learners Charter School (Durango School District 9-R)
- EXCEL School (Durango School District 9-R)
- Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)
- Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District)
- Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Junior High (Jefferson County School District)
- Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District)
- Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)
- Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District)
- Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez School District)
- Lake George - Guffey Charter School (Park School District)
- Liberty Common School (Poudre School District)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60)
- Youth and Family Academy Charter School (Pueblo District 60)
- Connect Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)
- Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 70)
- Aspen/Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District)
- Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District)
- Frontier Academy (Weld County School District 6)
- Union Colony Charter School (Weld County School District 6)
- Crown Pointe Academy of Westminster (Westminster School District 50)

The following schools (5.8% of the total cohort covered by this study) did not respond to repeated requests for data from CDE over a time period of several months:

- CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools)
- Youth and Family Academy (Pueblo School District 60).

For these schools, this study reports only certain demographic data regularly maintained by the Colorado Department of Education, and, where applicable, Colorado Student Assessment (CSAP) scores.

Some of the schools that submitted completed evaluation materials did not report data for all the issues addressed in this study. Therefore, the sample size relative to specific characteristics or performance issues varies from 42 schools to 51 schools, depending on the source of the data and the response rate of the schools.

Methodology

This evaluation study rests on a paper review of student achievement and school performance data regularly maintained by the charter schools and reported to their authorizing districts. The evaluation did not involve site visits to the schools and did not require supplemental data collection on their part. However, CDE did ask the schools to complete evaluation materials (described below). This process may have required some of the schools to examine or assess their data in ways they would not otherwise have done. The only original data collection undertaken in connection with this evaluation took the form of a questionnaire about practices related to diverse issues of interest to CDE, including the delivery of services to students with disabilities, parent involvement, technical assistance needs, lessons learned and effective practices.

This evaluation approach is consistent with the Colorado Charter Schools Act, which places accountability for charter schools squarely with their authorizing districts, and not with the state. However, it has limitations. There are effective and promising practices going on in individual charter schools that cannot be captured by an evaluation of this sort. Similarly, there may be significant issues of concerns in individual charter schools that are not identified through a paper review.

The data analyzed in this study was obtained from the following sources:

- Charter school administrators completed a data matrix/school profile to provide 1998-99 information on the school's educational program, budget, governance, student population and student achievement and school performance measures. (A sample data matrix is included in the Appendix.)

- Charter school administrators completed the 1999 Charter Schools Evaluation Questionnaire. (The questionnaire is included in the Appendix.)

- Charter applications, charter contracts, waiver requests, school improvement plans, annual reports and other documentation on file at the Colorado Department of Education provided information about waiver requests, school programs, school performance goals, governance and student and school performance.

- The database at the Colorado Department of Education provided data regarding student enrollment, school demographics, and suspension and expulsion rates. The data regarding student enrollment and student demographics was reported by the charter schools (through their authorizing districts) (not from the charter schools themselves) on the October "count day" in 1998. The suspension and expulsion data was reported to CDE at the end of the 1998-99 school year, again through the authorizing districts. Several of the charter schools in this study questioned the accuracy of this information and expressed concern or confusion about the protocol for reporting this data. This issue warrants further investigation and review by CDE.

- The third year evaluation study of charter schools conducted by the U.S. Department of Education provided data related to the national charter school context.[3]

PART II - THE COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT

Purpose

The Colorado Charter Schools Act declares that its purpose is to:

- Improve pupil learning by creating schools with high, rigorous standards for pupil performance,
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, especially those with low levels of academic achievement,
- Encourage diverse approaches to education,
- Allow the development of innovative forms of measuring student performance,
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers,
- Provide parents and pupils with increased educational choice, and
- Encourage parental involvement in public schools.[4]

General Provisions

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian, non-religious, non-home-based schools. Charter schools operate "within" the districts that grant their charters and are accountable to the authorizing district's board of education. Charter schools are subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special educational services. Charter schools must be open to any child who resides within the school district, but they are not required to alter the structure or arrangement of their facilities except as required by state or federal law. Private schools and home-based schools may not be converted to charter schools. A majority of the charter school's students must live in the chartering district or contiguous districts.[5]

Charter schools are administered by governing bodies as described in the charter application. Charter schools may organize as nonprofit corporations while retaining their status as public schools, but are not required to do so. Charter schools may not charge tuition for K-12 programs and services, but may charge for before- and after-school services or pre-kindergarten classes.[6]

Charter schools operate free from school district policies and state laws and regulations as specified in their charter contracts. Local boards of education may waive the application of their regulations without seeking approval of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education may waive state statutory requirements and rules promulgated by the state board.[7]

Charter schools are responsible for their own operations, including preparation of budgets, contracting for services and personnel matters. Charter schools may, at their discretion, contract with their authorizing districts for the purchase of district services. Authorizing districts are required to provide such services to the charter school at cost.[8]

The Charter School Contracts

The Act contains specific timelines for submission and review of charter applications, which may be waived by mutual agreement between the charter applicant and the authorizing district. Charter applications must be filed with the local board of education by October 1 to be eligible for consideration the following school year. Applications are reviewed by the school district's accountability committee prior to consideration by the board of education. The local board is required to hold community meetings on the proposed charter, after which the board must rule on the application within 75 days. The contract between the charter school and the school district must be finalized within 90 days of the time the board of education approves an application. If the local board denies the application or imposes unacceptable conditions on the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education.[9]

The approved charter application serves as the basis for a contract between a charter school and the board of education of its authorizing district. The contract between the charter school and the district must reflect all agreements regarding the waiver of school district policies and requests for waivers from state regulations and statutes.[10]

The charter application must specify:

- A mission statement, goals, objectives and performance goals for students in the school.
- Evidence that an adequate number of parents, teachers and students support the formation of the charter school.
- A detailed description of the school's educational program, pupil performance standards and curriculum, which must meet or exceed any content standards adopted by the school district in which the charter school is located, and which must be designed to enable each student to achieve the standards.
- A description of the charter school's plan for evaluating student performance, including the types of assessments and a timeline for meeting the school's performance goals.
- Evidence that the charter school's plan is economically sound for both the charter school and the authorizing district, a proposed budget and a description of the annual audit process.
- A description of the governance and operation of the charter school.
- An explanation of the relationships that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees.
- An agreement between the parties regarding their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage.
- A description of how the charter school plans to meet the transportation needs of its students.
- A description of the school's enrollment policy.
- A third-party dispute resolution process to resolve disputes that may arise concerning the implementation of the charter contract. If there is no provision in the contract, the Colorado Department of Education provides dispute resolution services. If either party refuses to participate in this process, the other party may appeal to the State Board of Education.[11]

Charter Revocation and Renewal

With certain exceptions, a new charter may be approved for a period of at least three years but not more than five years and may be renewed for periods not exceeding five years. The charter school must submit a renewal application to the local board no later than December 1 of the year prior to the academic year in which a charter is scheduled to expire. The local board of education is required to rule on the renewal application no later than the following February 1 or a mutually agreed upon date. A renewal application must contain a progress report on the charter school and a financial statement that discloses the costs of operating the charter school.[12]

The local board of education may revoke or non-renew a charter for the following reasons:

- The charter school committed a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures in the charter application.
- The charter school failed to make reasonable progress toward achieving the content or pupil performance standards set for in its application.
- The charter school failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
- The charter school violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.[13]

In addition, the local board of education may non-renew a charter upon a finding that it is not in the best interest of the pupils residing in the district to continue operation of the school. Any decision not to renew a charter may be appealed (refer to page 7).[14]

Employee Options

A teacher employed by an authorizing district who is hired by a charter school is considered to be on a one-year leave of absence from the authorizing district. The teacher and the district may agree to renew the leave for two additional one-year periods. At the end of this period, the district has the authority to determine the relationship between it and the teacher and provide notice to the teacher. The local board of education also has the authority to determine the status of school district employees who worked in charter schools and later seek re-employment with the district. Employees of charter schools are members of the Colorado Public Employee Retirement Association or the Denver Public Schools' Retirement Association.[15]

Finance and Facility Issues

Facilities issues generally are left to negotiations between the charter school and its authorizing district. The Act provides that a charter school may negotiate and contract with a school district, the governing body of a state college or university or any third party for the use of a school building or grounds. The Act prohibits authorizing districts from charging rent to charter schools occupying district-owned facilities.[16] Recent amendments to the Act also make clear that charter schools may issue financial obligations that are exempt from state and federal income tax.[17]

Pupils enrolled in a charter school are included in the pupil enrollment of the authorizing school district. The district receives full funding under the School Finance Act for each charter school student in the district. The Act requires the charter school to negotiate resources with its authorizing district.[18] Historically, a charter school's financing has been based upon the authorizing district's "per pupil operating revenues" (PPOR), which in turn is based upon the authorizing district's per pupil revenues (PPR). A district's PPR results when the district's total program, as calculated under the School Finance Act, is divided by the district's total funded pupil count for the year. The PPOR results when the "mandatory transfer" to capital and insurance reserve funds required by law is subtracted from the PPR.

In the original 1993 Act, the district and charter school were to "begin discussion" on the funding formula in the contract using *80% of the district's PPOR*. This section of the Act was amended in 1999.[19] Beginning with the budget year 2000-2001, the charter school and authorizing school district will negotiate funding under the contract at a minimum of *95% of the district PPR* for each pupil enrolled in the charter school. The district may choose to retain up to 5% of the district PPR as payment for the charter school's portion of central administrative overhead costs incurred by the school district.[20] The Act specifically defines the cost items that can be included in overhead.[21] As part of this new funding formula, the charter school will be required to transfer a specified amount for each student enrolled into accounts that the school can use only for capital reserve and risk management purposes.[22]

Beginning with the 2000-2001 budget year, each school district must provide federally required educational services to students enrolled in charter schools on the same basis as such services are provided to students enrolled in other public schools in the district. Unless the charter school and the authorizing district negotiate an alternate arrangement, the charter school will reimburse the school district (on a per pupil basis) for the costs incurred by the district in providing federally required educational services.[23]

The authorizing school district must direct the proportionate share of state and federal resources generated by students with disabilities (or staff serving them) to the charter school enrolling the students. The proportionate share of moneys generated under other federal and state categorical aid programs also must be directed to charter schools serving students eligible for such aid, as required by the federal Charter School Expansion Act of 1998.[24]

The Appeal Process

The Charter Schools Act requires each charter school and its authorizing district to agree on a third-party dispute resolution process to resolve disagreements that may arise concerning implementation of the charter contract. If the charter contract does not specific a dispute resolution process, the Colorado Department of Education provides dispute resolution services. If either party refuses to participate in this process, the other party may appeal to the State Board of Education.[25]

Under the Act's appeal procedures, a charter applicant who wishes to appeal a local board of education's decision must file a notice of appeal with the State Board of Education within 30 days of the decision. Within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal, the state board is required to hold a public hearing to review the decision of the local board and makes its findings. If the state board finds the local board's decision was contrary to the best interest of the pupils, school district or community, it must remand the decision to the local board with written instructions to reconsider. The local board must reconsider its decision with 30 days of the remand and make a final decision. If the local board's decision is still adverse, a charter applicant or operator appeal file a second appeal within 30 days of the final decision. Within 30 days of the receipt of the

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second notice of appeal, the state board is required to hold a second hearing and determine whether the local board's decision was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district or community. If such a finding is made the state board must remand the local board's final decision with instructions to approve the charter application. The state board's decision is final and not subject to appeal.[26]

In *Board of Education School District No. 1 v. Booth*,[27] the Colorado Supreme Court upheld the appeal provision of the Act. Denver Public Schools had challenged the appeal procedure on the grounds that it violated local control of education as guaranteed in the Colorado Constitution.

As of December 31, 1999, the State Board of Education had disposed of 74 appeals under the Colorado Charter Schools Act. Of this total number, the State Board had:

- Upheld 28 local board of education decisions,
- Remanded 20 decisions back to the local board of education for reconsideration,
- Ordered the establishment of two charter schools,
- Overturned one local board revocation of a charter,
- Vacated five hearings, and
- Dismissed 18 appeals.

PART III - CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

The 51 charter schools in this study served 12,972 students during the 1998-99 school year. The charter schools in the study represented 3.3% of Colorado's schools and 1.9% of the state's student population.

This section of the report looks at some key characteristics of Colorado charter schools and the students and families they served, in the context of statewide and national data. It is useful to take of trends and averages in order to present a picture of the Colorado charter schools, their work and their record of accomplishment. It is important to note, however, that the charter schools in this study were a diverse lot. The range of experience among the charter schools in this study – with respect to nearly every issue discussed in this report – was as broad as the differences that existed between charter schools, as a group, and their public school counterparts.

Student Enrollment

The charter schools in the study ranged in size, depending on their location, the grade levels served and educational philosophy. Many charter schools increased their enrollment from the 1997-98 to 1998-99 school year as they added additional grades or built their capacity to serve more students.

Of the 51 schools in this 1998-99 Evaluation Study:
- 14% (seven schools) served under 100 students,
- 37% (19 schools) served between 101 and 200 students,
- 20% (10 schools) served between 201 and 300 students,
- 23% (12 schools) served between 301 and 500 students, and
- 6% (three schools) served over 500 students.

The number of students enrolled by the charter schools in this study ranged from 985 students in Roosevelt Edison Charter School (El Paso District 11) to eight students in Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts). The average 1998-99 enrollment was 245 students. The median 1998-99 enrollment was 192 students.

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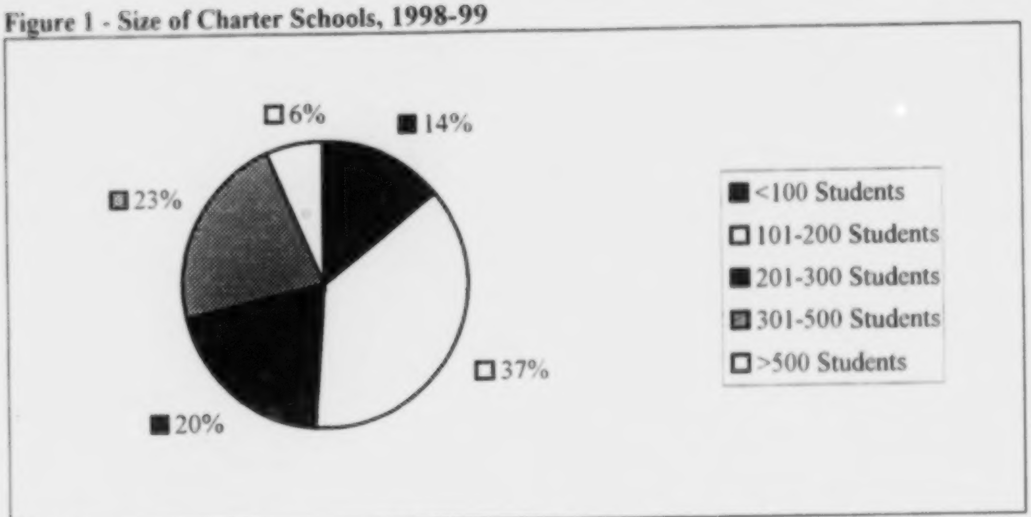
Figure 1 - Size of Charter Schools, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, as of "count day" (October) 1998.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado: In the fall of 1998, 1,568 public schools in Colorado served 699,135 students. The average elementary school in Colorado served 384 students. The average middle served 560 students and the average junior high school served 410 students. The average high school served 683 and the average alternative high school served 115 students.

National Charter Schools: On a national basis, approximately 65% of charter schools enrolled fewer than 200 students each, compared with just 16% of conventional public schools. About 36% of charter schools nationally enrolled fewer than 100 students. In contrast to these very small schools, about 10% of the charter schools had more than 600 students. Nationally, charter schools had a median enrollment of about 150 students, compared to a median enrollment of about 486 students in other public schools.[28]

Student-to-Teacher Ratio

Colorado Department of Education data related to student-to-teacher ratios for the 1998-99 school year was not available. CDE was piloting the Automated Data Exchange Project during the time period when this data ordinarily would have been collected.

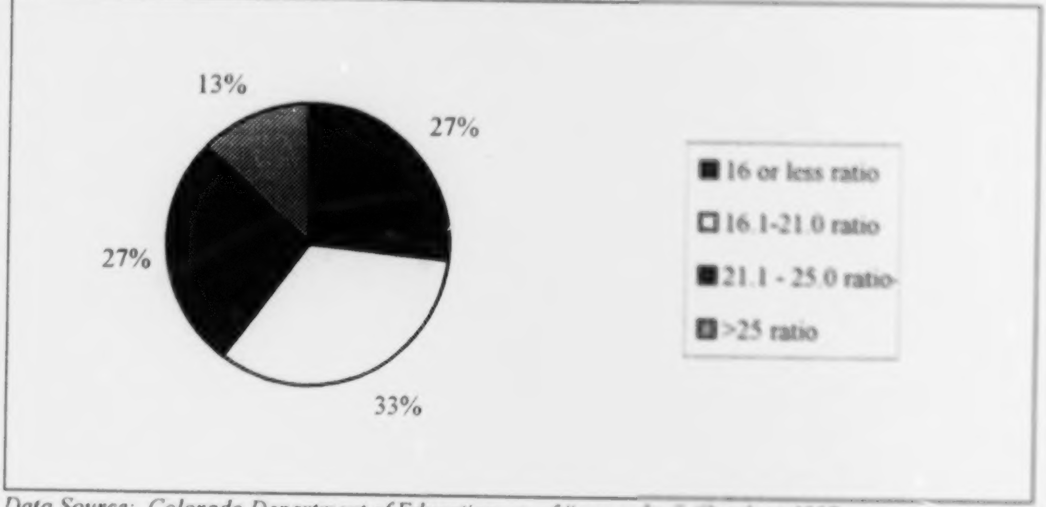
The data discussed in this section was from the1997-98 school year, the most recent data available. The ratio was calculated on the basis of students to all staff members assigned to professional activities or instructing students in self-contained classrooms or courses. The CDE count therefore includes not only classroom teachers, but also special education teachers and special subject teachers, including music, art, physical education and driver education.

Data related to the 1997-98 student-to-teacher ratio was available for 45 of the 51 schools in this study. Of the 45 schools:

- 27% (12 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 16.0 or under,
- 33% (15 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 16.1 to 21.0,
- 27% (12 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 21.1 to 25.0, and
- 13% (six schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 25.1 or over.

The student-teacher ratios for charter schools in this study ranged from 38.1 at Community Prep Charter School (El Paso District 11) to 6.5 at the Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District). The 1997-98 average student-teacher ratio of the charter schools was 19.7. The median student-teacher ratio was 19.3.

Figure 2 - Student-Teacher Ratio in Charter Schools, 1997-98



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, as of "count day" (October) 1997.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado: In the fall of 1997, Colorado's student-to-teacher ratio was 18.2, lower than the average ratio for charter schools in this study. When specialized subject areas (special education, Title I and Title 6 teachers) were removed from the calculation, however, average charter school student-teacher ratios were lower than the state average.

National Charter Schools: Data regarding the student-to-teacher ratio was not reported in the national evaluation of charter schools.

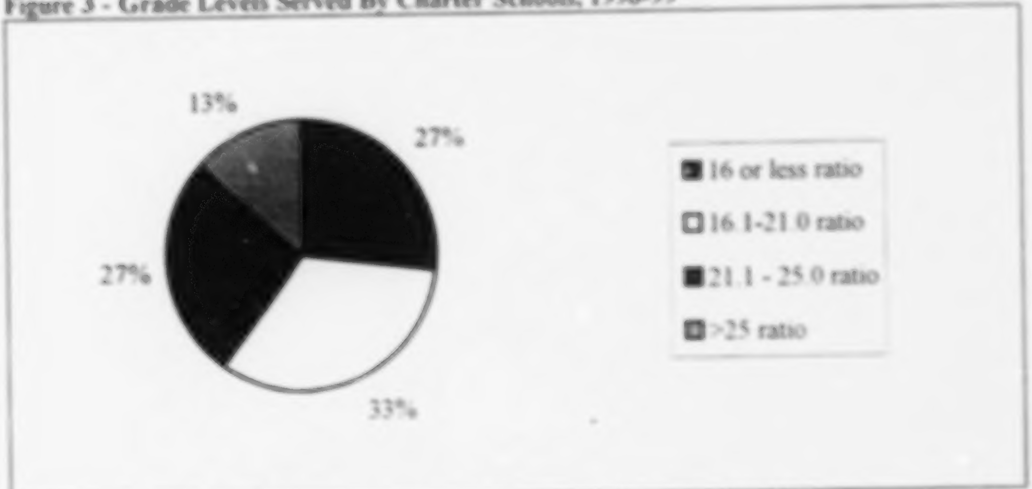
Grade Levels

Less than a third of the charter schools in this study (16 schools, 31%) fit the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools. Most of the schools offered a program that served students continuously from elementary through middle school, from middle school through secondary school, or throughout their public school experience. Well over half (33 schools, 65%) of the schools served elementary or elementary and middle school students.

1998-99 data on grade levels was available for all 51 schools in this study. Of the 51 schools,

- 21% (11 schools) were elementary schools,
- 41% (21 schools) were K- 8 schools,
- 10% (five schools) were middle schools or junior high schools,
- 12% (six schools) were middle/high schools,
- 6% (three schools) were high schools, and
- 10% (five schools) were K - 12 schools.

Figure 3 - Grade Levels Served By Charter Schools, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, as of October "count day" 1997

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado. Charter schools were much more likely than other public schools in Colorado to combine elementary and middle school grade levels, middle and secondary school grades levels, and to offer an educational program that serves students in grades K-12. In Colorado, only about 15% of public schools did not fit the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or secondary schools. In contrast, 69% of the charter schools in the study offered programs that fall outside traditional grade-level configurations.

National Charter Schools. Nationally, 52% of charter schools fit the traditional grade-level configuration, compared to 78% of all public schools in the 24 states included in the national evaluation.[29]

Source Of Students Enrolled In Colorado Charter Schools

Of the 51 charter schools in this 1998-99 evaluation study, only about half maintained data regarding whether their students were previously enrolled in home schools, in private schools or in another public schools. Among those schools that tracked this data, there was an extremely broad variation of results depending on the size and location of the charter school.

The data as a whole confirms that charter schools brought students into the public education system who otherwise would have been pursuing private, home-school or other options. However, the data was not specific enough to support a conclusion about the total number of these students.

The percentage of students drawn from home schools ranged from 0% at several schools to 25% at Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District). The percentage of students drawn from private schools ranged from 0% at several schools to 36% at the Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60).

Educational Program

The diversity of the educational approaches being offered by Colorado charter schools is reflected in Table 1, which identifies the distinctive components of their programs. This diversity was responsive to the intent of the Colorado Charter Schools Act to offer new educational options to students and their parents.

Thirty-one of the 51 schools (61%) in the study used a recognized national reform model as the foundation of their educational program. These reform models included:

Core Knowledge - 22 schools: Classical Academy (Academy School District 20), Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 School District), Pinnacle Charter Academy (Adams 12 School District), Mountain View Core Knowledge Charter School (Canon City School District), Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District); Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District); Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District), Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District), Platte River Academy Charter School (Douglas County Charter School), Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County Charter

School), Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District), Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District), Jefferson Academy Elementary School (Jefferson County School District), Jefferson Academy Jr. High School (Jefferson County School District), Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District), Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District), Littleton Academy Charter School (Littleton School District), Liberty Common School (Poudre School District), Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 60); Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District), Frontier Academy (Weld School District 6), and Crown Pointe Academy Charter School (Westminster School District 50).

Paideia - three schools: Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District)[30], and Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo District 60).

Montessori - two schools: DSC Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District) and Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson Academy Charter School).

Modern Red Schoolhouse - one school: Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District).[31]

William Glasser's Quality School Network - one school: Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District).

The Coalition of Essential Schools - one school: The Connect School (Pueblo School District 70).

The National Edison Project - one school: Roosevelt Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11).

The remainder of the schools in the study offered educational programs that combined various reform models and practices. While subsets of this remainder shared common practices and characteristics, they could not be grouped into identifiable categories for purposes of comparing the relative performance of different reform models.

The cohort of charter schools using the Core Knowledge reform model is notable both for its size (representing 42% of all schools in this study) and for its dominance as a reform model used by charter schools (22 schools versus three schools for the reform model used by the second highest number of schools). In-Section IX of this report, the study presents student and school performance data for the Core Knowledge and Paideia schools as cohort groups. Results for the other reform models were not summarized because they involved so few schools that the performance of the reform model could easily be tracked directly through the affiliated school(s).

Core Knowledge is an approach to curriculum based on the work of E.D.Hirsch, Jr. The focus of the Core Knowledge approach is on teaching a common core of concepts, skills and knowledge that characterize a "culturally literate" and educated individual. Core Knowledge is based on the principle that the grasp of a specific and shared body of knowledge will help students establish strong foundations for higher levels of learning. Developed through research examining successful national and local core curricula and through consultation with education experts in each subject area, the Core Knowledge Sequence provides a consensus-based model of specific content guidelines for students in the elementary grades. It offers a progression of detailed grade-by-grade topics of knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts, and fine arts, so that students build on knowledge from year to year in grades K-8. Instructional strategies are left to the discretion of teachers. The Core Knowledge sequence typically comprises 50% of schools' curriculum; the other 50% allows schools to meet state and local requirements and teachers to contribute personal strengths. Parent involvement and consensus building contribute to the success of the Core Knowledge Sequence.[32]

Paideia's purpose is to prepare each student for earning a living, being a citizen of this county and the world and pursuing life long learning. The model is based on the work of Mortimer Adler. Paideia educators believe that high academic achievement is expected of all students and that it is society's duty to provide that opportunity. A fundamental value in this model is that universal, high quality education is essential to democracy. Instructional goals are based on acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual skills, and enlarged understanding of ideas and values. These are addressed through three instructional approaches:

- didactic instruction: teacher lecturing which provides opportunities for "acquisition of knowledge";
- coaching: one-on-one instruction from the teacher, which takes place while students work independently at their own level and pace; and
- small group seminars: which usually use the Socratic method of questioning to explore issues in greater depth.

Schoolwide restructuring is necessary to fully implement all three instructional pieces, as Socratic seminars require longer class periods, while coaching may call for smaller classes enabling teachers to spend more time with individuals. The National Paideia Center advocates schools' using locally developed standards.[33]

There has been some debate about whether the educational programs offered by the charter schools were more innovative than conventional public schools. Innovation is in the eye of the beholder. Instructional practices that are routine in some schools may be highly innovative in others. Moreover, the same reform strategy can be expressed very distinctly in different schools, depending on the school's culture and policy context and on the level of support for reform. Therefore, while the educational approaches used in charter schools may not have been different from those used in conventional public schools, the duration and intensity of those reforms may well have been.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the charter schools have tilled new ground in areas other than their educational programs. In the areas of governance, parent involvement, and employment policies, the charter schools, as a group, operated in ways that were dramatically different than most conventional public schools.

CDE asked the charter schools in this study, via the evaluation questionnaire, to identify the top three characteristics of their educational programs that have contributed to their success. Forty-four of the 51 schools (86%) completed the questionnaire. The results showed remarkable consensus across regions of the state, school size, school level, and educational approach.

- Half of the schools cited the **school's philosophy or mission** as central to the school's success. The responding schools emphasized the importance of having this philosophy clearly articulated and broadly shared among the members of the school community. They stressed the importance of staying focused on mission and of not diluting the philosophy that inspired the creation of the school in the first place.

- Nearly half of the schools identified the **curriculum** used by their schools as being of critical importance to their success. The schools that cited this factor crossed the range of curricula used, from "back to basics" or more open-ended approaches. Several respondents emphasized the importance of a curriculum that reflects high expectations for student performance.

- Nearly half of the schools identified issues related to **school or class size** as key to their success. Six schools cited their small size as important in creating an effective learning environment and a vital sense of community. Ten more schools referred to both the smaller school size and the smaller student-to-teacher ratio (compared to most other public schools) as critical issues in their success. Another eight schools identified low teacher-student ratios as a central feature of their educational program.

- Just under half of the schools cited the **quality of their staff** as a critical ingredient of their success. Respondents consistently used adjectives such as dedicated, innovative, committed, and excellent to describe their teachers. Several schools underscored the point that teachers are most effective in charter schools when they clearly understand and are committed to a particular school's instructional philosophy.

- Nearly a third of the schools cited **parental involvement** as a critical factor in success.

- Just under ten percent of the schools referred to **multiage classrooms** as a critical feature. The same percentage named their schools' **staff development program**. An equal percentage of schools referred to **individualized instruction**.

Other factors identified by a single school included:

- emphasis on character education,
- latitude for innovation,
- shared planning time for teachers during the school day,
- safe learning environment,
- outside funding from grants and private funds,
- emphasis on quality, and
- being slow to change.

Table 1: Overview of Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1993, Fall 1994

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Academy of Charter Schools	Stargate	Academy Charter School	Core Know-ledge	Comm. Of Learners	EXCEL School	Eagle	Colle-giate	Comm Involv	Jeffer-son Acad.	Battle Rock	Pueblo School Arts/ Sci	Connect
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction		X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Technology as a major focus						X	X			X	X	X	X
Core Knowledge curriculum	X		X	X			X			X			
Community as classroom		X			X	X			X		X		
Individualized learning plans		X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Multi-age groupings		X			X	X			X		X	X	X
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)								X	X			X	
Character instruction			X						X				
Hands-on/Experiential learning			X		X		X		X		X	X	X
Extended academic day/year								X					
Foreign language instruction at all grades	X	X	X	X		X					X	X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling			X		X	X		X	X			X	X
Year-Round Calendar					X								
Community Service/Service Learning									X		X	X	
Montessori													

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Table 1 (Continued): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1995

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Cherry Creek Academy	Renaissance	P.S.1	Comm. Prep	GLOBE	Cheyenne Mountain	Marble	Excel Academy (Arvada)	Crestone	Aspen Carbondale
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction		X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Technology as a major focus				X					X	
Core Knowledge curriculum	X					X				
Community as classroom			X		X		X			X
Individualized learning plans		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Multi-age groupings		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Focus on specific subject matter (e g arts, science/math)										
Character instruction	X		X							X
Hands-on/Experiential learning		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Extended academic day/year	X									
Foreign language instruction at all grades		X			X				X	
Block or other non-traditional scheduling			X							
Year-Round Calendar		X	X					X		
Community Service/Service Learning			X	X	X				X	X
Montessori										

Table 1 Continued: Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1996

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	**Summit Middle**	**Roosevelt-Edison**	**Mt. View Core Know.**	**Jefferson Jr. High**	**Lewis Palmer**	**Littleton Academy**	**Lake George - Guffey**	**Swallows Academy**
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction		X	X				X	
Technology as a major focus	X	X		X				
Core Knowledge curriculum			X	X	X	X		X
Community as classroom		X					X	
Individualized learning plans		X	X		X	X	X	
Multi-age groupings	X	X					X	
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)	X							
Character instruction	X	X	X	X				X
Hands-on/experiential learning		X	X				X	
Extended academic day/year		X						
Foreign language instruction at all grades	X	X	X			X		
Block or other non-traditional scheduling						X		
Year-Round Calendar								
Community Service/Service Learning							X	
Montessori								

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Table 1 Continued: Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1997

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Classical Academy	Pinnacle	Prairie Creeks	Boulder Prep	Horizons	CIVA ***	Pioneer ***	Colorado Visionary	DSC Montessori	Platte River Academy
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction		X			X					X
Technology as a major focus			X	X	X			X		X
Core Knowledge curriculum	X	X						X		X
Community as classroom				X	X				X	
Individualized learning plans		X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Multi-age groupings		X	X	X	X				X	X
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)										
Character instruction	X		X	X	X				X	X
Hands-on/Experiential learning	X			X	X			X	X	X
Extended academic day/year				X				X		X
Foreign language instruction at all grades	X				X			X	X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling		X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Year-Round Calendar				X						
Community Service/Service Learning				X	X					X
Montessori									X	

***School did not report

Table 1 Continued: Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1997

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	**Elbert County**	**Lincoln Acdmy**	**Magnet School Deaf**	**Monte-ssori Peaks**	**Liberty Common**	**Youth Family Academy *****	**Twin Peaks**	**Frontier**	**Union Colony**	**Crown Pointe**
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction									X	
Technology as a major focus				X						X
Core Knowledge curriculum	X	X			X		X	X		X
Community as classroom										
Individualized learning plans				X	X		X	X		X
Multi-age groupings	X			X			X			
Focus on specific subject matter (e g. arts, science/math)										
Character instruction	X				X		X	X		X
Hands-on/Experiential learning				X	X					
Extended academic day/year				X	X					
Foreign language instruction at all grades				X	X		X		X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling					X				X	
Year-Round Calendar										
Community Service/Service Learning							X			
Montessori				X						

*** School did not report

The Delivery Of Special Education Services In Colorado Charter Schools

As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student who lives within the authorizing school district, and must provide appropriate services as needed by students with disabilities. Charter Schools are not required to make alterations in the structure of their facility, except as may be required by state or federal law.[18]

The delivery of educational services to students with disabilities presents a financial challenge to many charter schools and may raise programmatic issues as well. The 1998-99 Charter Schools Evaluation Questionnaire sought more information about the way Colorado charter schools collaborated with their authorizing districts to serve students with disabilities. The questionnaire asked charter schools to identify the basic model they used for delivering special education services, and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of their approach.

Forty two of the 51 schools in this study provided information about the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities. Of the 42 schools,

- 9.5% (four schools) assumed total responsibility for special education services.
- 16.5% (seven schools) paid their authorizing districts to assume total responsibility for special education services in their schools.
- 74% (31 schools) shared responsibility for special education services with their authorizing districts.

Schools in each category commended the approach they used for both quality and cost-effectiveness. These responses suggested that there was no single best approach to serving students with disabilities in all charter schools, in terms of either quality or cost. Rather, it was appropriate for each charter school to weigh the pros and cons of the delivery options, depending on its size, location, student population, finances, relationship with the authorizing district and other factors. Each charter school balanced its desire for autonomy against the advantages of collaboration (primarily access to the expertise and economies of scale of the authorizing district) and balanced its tolerance for risk against the cost of "insuring" (through collaboration with the authorizing district) against the very high costs of serving students with severe needs.

CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSUME TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Charter schools in this category hired staff, developed Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and provided their own services , contracting with third parties for specialized services as needed.

The schools that employed this approach during the 1998-99 school year cited the following advantages:

- This approach was less expensive than paying authorizing districts "an insurance premium" for special education services.
- This approach supported increased autonomy from the authorizing district.
- School-based planning facilitated the close involvement of parents and implementation of a full inclusion model.

- Contracting with third parties on a needs-basis allowed charter schools to buy services tailored to the individual needs of students with disabilities.
- In inclusive settings, special education teachers can work with many students in the classrooms and not just those students on IEPs.

The major disadvantage of this approach was the financial risk assumed by the charter schools. As new students with disabilities enrolled in the charter schools or when the educational needs of current students with disabilities changed, the school assumed the risk of an uncertain (and potentially large) financial impact on its budget. The schools in this category noted that the costs of providing special education services without district assistance could be high in both fiscal and human terms.

AUTHORIZING DISTRICTS ASSUME TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY

This approach is an insurance model, under which the charter school paid the authorizing district on a per pupil basis to assume the financial risk of providing special education services to eligible students as required by law. Most arrangements under this model calculated the fee by multiplying a negotiated per pupil cost times the total number of students in the school. In a few cases, the fee was based on a percentage of the PPOR the charter school received from the authorizing district under the terms of the Charter Schools Act.

The advantages to this approach cited by the schools in this study were:

- The school had the assurance of legal protection if the services provided were challenged by a student's parents.
- The school enjoyed the benefit of the district's expertise and access to district services and placements for students with intense needs.
- The school was protected from extreme risk factors and had predictability in budgeting.
- The school did not need to hire its own special education staff.
- The school was able to provide services at a high level of quality.

The disadvantages to this approach included:

- This approach was very expensive and added to the financial difficulties many charter schools were already trying to manage.
- The authorizing district was not always responsive in terms of answering the school's questions, clearly informing teachers about their responsibilities, or providing consistently the quality and type of services the charter school personnel felt students needed. One respondent noted that the charter school frequently received inconsistent answers to its questions from the authorizing district.
- In cases where the authorizing district provided special education services on an as-needed basis, special education staff were not on-site at all times to serve as a resource to teachers and students.
- The authorizing district assigned special education staff to the charter school and the staff did not always share the school's educational philosophy. One respondent also expressed concern about the quality of some of the instructors placed by the district.

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND AUTHORIZING DISTRICT COLLABORATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

This category embraced a myriad of different collaborations, some very flexible and informal, others more structured and defined. Under this model, the charter schools generally paid for special education staff and direct services, while the authorizing district provided support. Charter schools paid for the district services on a per-pupil fee basis or through the negotiated rate of funding received by the charter school from the authorizing district.

Depending of the particular collaboration negotiated in each individual case, district support included: staff development services, general information and advice, legal counsel, insurance, participation of district staff in IEP development, district review of placement options for students with disabilities, and services of district specialists (occupational therapy, speech therapy, general health screening, psychologist).

The charter schools that employed this approach identified these advantages:

- Collaboration with the authorizing district brought a greater depth of expertise and a broader range of resources to enhance the quality of services for students with disabilities.
- Collaboration allowed the charter school to balance its interest in autonomy (and its desire to create its own model for service delivery) against the benefits of centralized coordination.
- In general, this approach was less expensive than the insurance model (where districts assumed total responsibility for special education services) because of economies of scale and the district's expertise. Moreover, the costs of this approach were predictable.
- Charter schools had the discretion to hire special education staff who understood and supported the school's unique program and philosophy.
- This approach provided an opportunity for interaction and relationship building between charter schools and their authorizing districts.
- Parents who sought out a particular charter school may have had more confidence in and satisfaction with services when the school (and not just the district) was involved in service delivery.

The charter schools identified the following disadvantages of the collaborative approach to the delivery of special education services:

- The collaborative approach placed more time demands on school administrative staff and teachers than a total insurance model would have. Coordination of activities was difficult because the schedules of both district personnel and school personnel had to be juggled.
- When the authorizing district sent special education personnel to the charter school on an as-needed basis, it was often difficult to build unity and common vision among the individuals providing services and to ensure consistent communication. Moreover, these district staff were not available for consultation or additional services at all times, but only at designated times.
- The collaborative approach might have been more expensive than if the charter schools provided the services directly. As one respondent noted, "we probably pay more; but we also sleep at night."
- Charter schools had to contend with the bureaucracy and "red tape" of the authorizing districts, trading off some of the autonomy they enjoyed as charter schools.

- One respondent noted that the charter school was occasionally marginalized in its dealings with the authorizing district, being treated by the district as a "stepchild" rather than one of "its own."
- One respondent noted that personnel from the authorizing district were often frustrated with the facility and resource limitations in the charter school.

Assessment Tools Used by the Charter Schools

As public schools, all charter schools were required to administer the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) in the appropriate content areas and grades. During the 1998-99 school year, the CSAP was administered in 3rd grade for reading, in 4th grade for reading and writing and in 7th grade for reading and writing. The CSAP is a standards-based assessment, aligned with the state model content standards. For a detailed discussion of the charter schools' CSAP scores, refer to Section IX.

To supplement the CSAP, the charter schools used a variety of assessments, depending on the school's educational approach and performance goals and the requirements of the authorizing district. Assessment experts agree that an assessment program should use an array of tests to measure different dimensions of student learning. No single test can provide a full picture of a student's progress or learning. In this regard, note that charter schools used teacher-produced and informal assessments regularly in the classroom, in addition to the more formal assessments discussed here.

Table 2 provides an overview of the assessment tools used by charter schools during the 1998-99 school year, organized into three broad categories:

- **Norm-referenced tests** are tests that measure the relative performance of the individual or group by comparison with the performance of other individuals or groups taking the same test. The norm-referenced test used by the most schools in this study was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), followed by Terra Nova.

- **Criterion-referenced tests** are tests whose scores are interpreted by reference to well-defined domains of content or behaviors, rather than by reference to the performance of some other group.

- **Performance assessments** are tests that measure ability by assessing open-ended responses or by asking the respondent to complete a task, produce a response or demonstrate a skill.

Table 2: Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1993 or 1994

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Academy of Charter Schools	Stargate	Academy Charter School	Core Knowledge	Comm. Learners	EXCEL School	Eagle	Collegiate	Comm Involv	Jefferson Acad.	Battle Rock	Pueblo School Arts/ Sci	Connect
Norm-Referenced Tests													
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)		X											
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)				X									
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)													
Durrell Reading Analysis													
Nelson-Denney Reading Test												X	
Terra Nova			X	X								X	X
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)													
Criterion-Referenced Tests													
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)			X	X									
Stanford Achievement Test													
Stanford Writing Assessment					X	X							
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment		X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
Woodcock Johnson									X				
High/Scope Child Observation Record													
Performance Assessments													
Individual Learning Programs		X			X		X	X			X	X	
Portfolios		X			X	X		X	X		X	X	
Student Exhibits		X					X	X			X	X	X

Table 2 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1995

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Cherry Creek Academy**	**Renaissance**	**P.S.1**	**Comm. Prep**	**GLOBE**	**Cheyenne Mountain**	**Marble**	**Excel Academy**	**Crestone**	**Aspen Carbondale**
Norm-Referenced Tests										
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X		X		X			X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)										
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)		X								
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)			X							
Durrell Reading Analysis										
Nelson-Denney Reading Test										
Terra Nova		X								
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)				X						
Criterion-Referenced Tests										
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)		X								
Stanford Achievement Test		X				X			X	
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment										
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment	X				X					
Woodcock Johnson			X							X
High/Scope Child Observation Record										X
Performance Assessments										
Individual Learning Programs			X	X					X	X
Portfolios		X	X	X	X					X
Student Exhibits		X	X	X						X

Table 2 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1996

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Summit Middle**	**Roosevelt Edison**	**Mountain View**	**Jefferson Jr. High**	**Lewis Palmer**	**Littleton Academy**	**Lake George - Guffey**	**Swallows Academy**
Norm-Referenced Tests								
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)		X	X	X	X	X	X	
California Achievement Test (CAT)								
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)	X	X						
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)								
Durrell Reading Analysis							X	
Nelson-Denney Reading Test								
Terra Nova								X
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)								
Criterion-Referenced Tests								
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)								
Stanford Achievement Test								X
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment							X	
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment		X	X		X			
Woodcock Johnson								
High/Scope Child Observation Record								
Performance Assessments								
Individual Learning Programs		X				X		X
Portfolios		X		X			X	
Student Exhibits							X	

Table 2 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1997

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Classical Academy**	**Pinnacle**	**Prairie Creeks**	**Boulder Prep**	**Horizons**	**CIVA *****	**Pioneer *****	**Colorado Visionary**	**DSC Montessori**	**Platte River Academy**
Norm-Referenced Tests										
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X							X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)		X								
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)				X	X					
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)										
Durrell Reading Analysis										
Nelson-Denney Reading Test										
Terra Nova										
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)								X	X	X
Criterion-Referenced Tests										
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)										
Stanford Achievement Test										
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment										
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment		X	X							X
Woodcock Johnson										
High/Scope Child Observation Record										
Performance Assessments										
Individual Learning Programs										X
Portfolios										X
Student Exhibits										X

** School did not report information

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Table 2 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1997

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Elbert County**	**Lincoln Academy**	**Magnet School of Deaf**	**Montessori Peaks**	**Liberty Common**	**Youth & Family Academy ****	**Twin Peaks**	**Frontier**	**Union Colony**	**Crown Pointe**
Norm-Referenced Tests										
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X	X		X	X			X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)							X			
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)										X
DALT										
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)										
Durrell Reading Analysis										
Nelson-Denney Reading Test										
Terra Nova				X			X			
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)										
Criterion-Referenced Tests										
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)										
Stanford Achievement Test										
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment										
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment									X	
Woodcock Johnson										
High/Scope Child Observation Record										
Performance Assessments										
Individual Learning Programs				X						
Portfolios				X						
Student Exhibits				X						

** School did not report information

PART IV - CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

Table 3, below, shows the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch,[39] of racial/ethnic minority students, and of students with disabilities who were served by the 51 charter schools in this study during the 1998-99 school year. These data were obtained from the CDE database, as of the October "count day" in 1998.

These data provide a reasonable basis for broadly assessing the diversity of students in Colorado charter schools compared to other public schools, but they have limitations and should be read with some caution.

- Perhaps most significantly, the figure "0%" can mean one of two things: (1) the school does not serve any students within that classification or (2) the school did not report the relevant data to CDE. The failure of some charter schools and/or their authorizing districts to report demographic data therefore likely had the effect of skewing the profile of charter schools as a whole. This was especially problematic with regard to data regarding student eligibility for free/reduced lunch. Over half of the charter schools in this study did not offer a hot lunch program during the 1998-99 school year. Although these schools were still required to report data about student eligibility for free/reduced lunch, many may not have done so.

- A related issue, noted in the introduction to this report, is that several schools questioned the accuracy of the data and expressed questions or concerns about the process for reporting data to their authorizing districts, and through their districts, to the state. This is an issue on which the Colorado Department of Education might want to follow-up.

- The total number of charter school students in this study was small compared to the 1998-99 student enrollment in all public schools (representing approximately 1.9% of the total student population). The percentages among categories could therefore change significantly with only slight alterations in the composition of student enrollment.

- A pattern of racial concentration in a particular school might have resulted from the school's location and does not necessarily suggest a deliberate policy of exclusion. The location of charter schools depended on the willingness of communities and school districts to welcome, or at least support, charter schools in the first few years of their development. None of the schools in this study applied an admissions process that excluded certain populations of students in a discriminatory manner.

As described in more detail in the following sections, the charter schools in this study served a population of students in 1998-99 that was diverse, but not as diverse as the population served by public schools overall.

Student Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch

The 51 charter schools in this study served 2,519 students in 1998-99 who were eligible for free/reduced lunch, representing 19.4% of the total enrollment (12,972) of the schools. The state average was 27.7%.

The percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% at The Classical Academy (Academy District 20), Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Trail School District), Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District), Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District), DSC Montessori School (Douglas County School District), Platte River Academy Charter (Douglas County School District) Renaissance Charter (Douglas County School District), Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District) , Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District), Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District), Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District), Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District), Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez School District, Connect Charter School (Pueblo District 70) Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 70), Aspen/Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District), and Crown Pointe Academy (Westminster School District 50) to 87.4% at Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools).

Fifteen schools in the study (31%) served approximately the same percentage (plus or minus five percentage points) of free/reduced lunch-eligible students as their authorizing districts. Another six schools (12%) served a greater percentage than their authorizing districts. Twenty nine schools (57%) served a smaller percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch than their authorizing districts.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Students

The 51 charter schools in this study served 2,599 racial/ethnic minority students in 1998-99, representing 20% of the schools' total enrollment (12,972). The state average was 29.4%.

The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% (Marble Charter School, Gunnison Watershed School District) to 97.4% (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools). Twenty-three schools in the study (45%) served approximately (plus or minus five percentage points) the same percentage of racial/ethnic minority students as their authorizing districts. Another six schools (12%) served a greater percentage than their authorizing districts. The remaining 22 schools (43%) served a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students than their authorizing districts.

Students with Disabilities

The 51 charter schools in this study served 868 students with disabilities, representing 6.7% of the schools' total enrollment (12,972). The state average was 10.2%

The percentage of students with disabilities served by the charter schools in this study ranged from 0% (Prairie Creeks Charter School, Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts; Lincoln Academy, Jefferson County School District, Crestone Charter School, Moffat Consolidated School District; and Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences, Pueblo School District

60) to 100% (Magnet School of the Deaf, Jefferson County School District). Ten schools in the study (20%) served approximately the same percentage of students with disabilities as their authorizing districts. Another eight schools in the study (16%) served a greater percentage than their authorizing districts. Thirty two schools (60%) served a smaller percentage (plus or minus two percentage points) of students with disabilities than their authorizing districts.

Table 3 - Charter Schools and Authorizing Districts-Student Characteristics, 1998-99

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**% students eligible for free/reduced lunch**	**% racial/ethnic minority students**	**% students with disabilities**
State of Colorado	***27.7%***	***29.4%***	***10.2%***
Academy School District 20	*3.7%*	*11.9%*	*6.7%*
The Classical Academy	0%	7.6%	2.6%
Adams 12 District	*20.2%*	*27.2%*	*10.6%*
Academy of Charter Schools	24.5%	27.9%	3.4%
Pinnacle Charter School	14.7%	27.9%	4.2%
Stargate Charter School	2.5%	20.3%	2.5%
Bennett School District	*21.6%*	*7.8%*	*11.4%*
Prairie Creeks Charter School	0%	12.5%	0%
Boulder Valley School District	*11.6%*	*17.7%*	*11.9%*
Boulder Preparatory School	8.8%	55.9%	26.5%
Horizons K-8 Alternative School	4.2%	7.5%	10.7%
Summit Middle School	3.9%	10.2%	2.4%
Canon City School District	*28.6%*	*9.3%*	*10.8%*
Mountain View Core Knowledge	10.2%	6.8%	7.3%
Cherry Creek School District	*9.3%*	*18.6%*	*11.0%*
Cherry Creek Academy	0%	5.6%	7.3%
Cheyenne Mountain District 12	*4.9%*	*11.4%*	*6.2%*
Cheyenne Mountain Charter	11.0%	10.3%	3.1%
Colorado Springs District 11	*32.5%*	*27.7%*	*9.4%*
CIVA Charter School	29.9%	21.5%	7.5%
Community Prep Charter	23.0%	40.5%	11.1%
GLOBE	25.7%	23.6%	9.3%
Roosevelt-Edison	64.6%	48.9%	9.7%

Table 3 (Cont.) - Charter Schools and Authorizing Districts-Student Characteristics, 1998-99

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**% students eligible - free/reduced lunch**	**% racial/ethnic minority students**	**% students with disabilities**
Denver Public Schools	*62.0%*	*75.6%*	*10.9%*
Pioneer Charter School	87.5%	97.4%	5.8%
P.S. 1	29.6%	45.9%	7.8%
Douglas County School District	*2.4%*	*8.4%*	*8.2%*
Academy Charter	6.0%	8.3%	10.1%
Colorado Visionary Academy	0%	7.6%	4.4%
Core Knowledge	1.4%	2.4%	3.7%
DSC Montessori School	0%	10.6%	2.4%
Platte River Academy Charter	0%	10.6%	4.2%
Renaissance Charter	0%	7.7%	7.0%
Durango School District 9-R	*21.3%*	*16%*	*8.8%*
Community of Learners	26.4%	25%	10.7%
EXCEL School	14.6%	15.5%	12.6%
Eagle County School District	*18.8%*	*31.7%*	*7.9%*
Eagle County Charter	0%	9.6%	8.4%
Elizabeth School District	*2.9%*	*6.8%*	*10.0%*
Elbert County Charter School	0%	10.9%	4.5%
Gunnison Watershed District	*10.3%*	*6.6%*	*9.2%*
Marble Charter School	0%	0%	35.3%
Jefferson County School District	*14.8%*	*15.4%*	*8.6%*
Collegiate Academy	3.5%	7.0%	11.7%
Community Involved	17.8%	14.4%	15.2%
Excel Academy	10.9%	6.4%	4.5%
Jefferson Academy - Elem.	2.6%	6.9%	9.8%
Jefferson Academy Jr. High	7.0%	8.8%	reported with Jefferson Elementary
Lincoln Academy	1.0%	10.0%	0%
Magnet School of the Deaf	37.5%	12.5%	100%
Montessori Peaks Academy	0%	11.7%	3.7%
Lewis Palmer School District	*4.6%*	*5.6%*	*8.6%*
Lewis Palmer Charter Acad.	0%	10.3%	5.9%

Table 3 (Cont.) - Charter Schools and Authorizing Districts-Student Characteristics, 1998-99

DISTRICT Charter School	% students eligible - free/reduced lunch	% racial/ethnic minority students	% students with disabilities
Littleton School District	*10.8%*	*9.8%*	*9.7%*
Littleton Academy	4.0%	5.8%	3.8%
Moffat Consolidated No. 2	*45.4 %*	*14.8%*	*6.6%*
Crestone Charter School	22.9%	14.6%	0%
Montezuma Cortez	*46.4%*	*31.9%*	*11.7%*
Battle Rock Charter	0%	12.5%	4.2%
Park County School District	*26.1%*	*7.5%*	*7.8%*
Lake George - Guffey	36.4%	7.9%	10.3%
Poudre School District	*18.0%*	*15.8%*	*9.9%*
Liberty Common Charter	13.0%	9.5%	3.2%
Pueblo School District 60	*53.6%*	*57.5%*	*9.3%*
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	54.6%	53.5%	0%
Youth and Family Academy	74.7%	80.5%	27.6%
Pueblo School District 70	*26.4%*	*25.3%*	*8.4%*
Connect Charter School	0%	12.0%	5.8%
Swallows Academy	0%	17.4%	1.6%
Roaring Fork School District	*16.9%*	*22.1%*	*7.1%*
Aspen Community School	0%	3.7%	2.1%
St. Vrain School District	*19.0%*	*22.1%*	*8.0%*
Twin Peaks Charter School	0.4%	8.8%	1.9%
Weld School District 6	*43.8 %*	*43.2%*	*11.9%*
Frontier Academy	27.0%	17.2%	7.7%
Union Colony Charter School	6.3%	17.2%	8.3%
Westminster School District 50	38.7%	49.5%	9.6%
Crown Pointe Academy	0%	35.8%	2.3%

Date Source: Colorado Department of Education, as of October "count day" 1998.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

State level data is reported in Table 3. In 1998-99, the total public school population included:

- 27.7% students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch and
- 29.9% racial/ethnic minority students,
- 10.2% students with disabilities.

National Charter Schools

- **School Racial/Ethnic Composition:** States vary greatly in the racial/ethnic composition of their public school students, and charter schools generally mirror the state's racial composition. Of the 13 states with ten or more charter schools, charter schools in six states enrolled a much lower percentage of white students than all public schools. Two states, including Colorado, enrolled a higher percentage of white students (between 5 and 10 percentage points) than all public schools. Another two states enrolled a higher percentage of white students (over 10 percentage points) than all public schools. Two states had about the same (less than 5% difference) percentage of white students in charter schools as compared to all public schools.[36]

- **Eligibility for Free/Reduced School Lunch.** Nationally, 37% of charter school students in the 24 states with charter schools were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a figure very similar to the 39% of student eligible in all public schools in those states. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is at least ten percentage points higher in charter schools than in all public schools in eight states and ten percentage points less in five states. In seven charter states, including Colorado, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch is within ten percentage points of that for all public schools.[37]

- **Students with Disabilities.** Without regard to differences across states, the reported percentage of students with disabilities at charter schools is 8%, which is somewhat less than the 11% for all public schools in the charter school states. In most states, including Colorado, the percentage of students with disabilities was similar (within 10 percentage points) to the percentage of students with disabilities in all public schools.[38]

A NOTE ABOUT STUDENTS "AT-RISK"

The preceding discussion on student characteristics does not fully capture the record of the charter schools with respect to their service of students who are educationally "at risk." Anecdotal evidence suggests that charter schools in Colorado (as well as the nation) provide a second chance for a considerable number of students who have not been successful in other educational settings and who are "at-risk" of educational failure. However, it is impossible to draw any hard conclusions about the total number of "at risk" students being served by the schools in this study because the schools do not define the concept of risk in a uniform way.

PART V - GOVERNANCE OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Governing Board Composition

The Colorado charter schools in this study were required to propose a governance structure in their charter applications. The authorizing district approved this structure, either as submitted or as modified through negotiations, in the charter school contract.

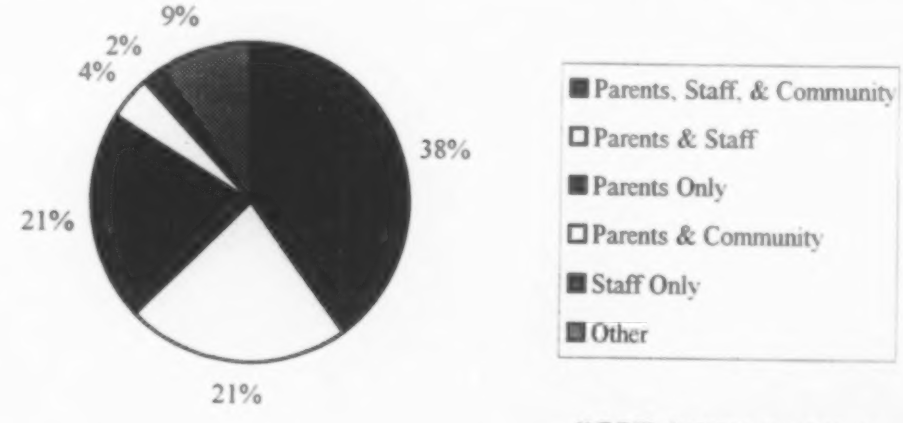
These charter school governing bodies had authority over curriculum, personnel, budget and all other aspects of the school, under the terms and conditions of the charter contract with the authorizing district. Almost all charter schools in the study employed an administrator (sometimes called a dean, educational director, lead teacher instead of a principal) who was responsible for making day-to-day operational decisions.

Forty seven of the 51 charter schools in this study provided information about the composition of their governing boards in 1998-99. Of these 47 schools,

- 38% (18 schools) had a governing board comprised of parents, school staff and community members,
- 28% (12 schools) had a board comprised of parents only,
- 21% (10 schools) had a board comprised of parents and school staff,
- 4% (two schools) had a board comprised of parents and community members,
- 2% (one schools) had a board comprised of teachers only, and
- 9% (four schools) were governed by a body other than a school-based governing board.[39]

Parents held a majority on the governing boards in 34 of the 47 charter schools (72%) in this 1998-99 study.

Figure 4 - Composition of Charter School Governing Boards, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

Administrator Turnover

A high rate of administrator turnover has challenged many charter schools in Colorado and throughout the nation. Some charter school communities struggled to find the right balance of responsibilities between policy-making boards and on-site administrators. Others may have found that making the transition of leadership from the charter school founders (often a parent or community group) to the professional staff was difficult.

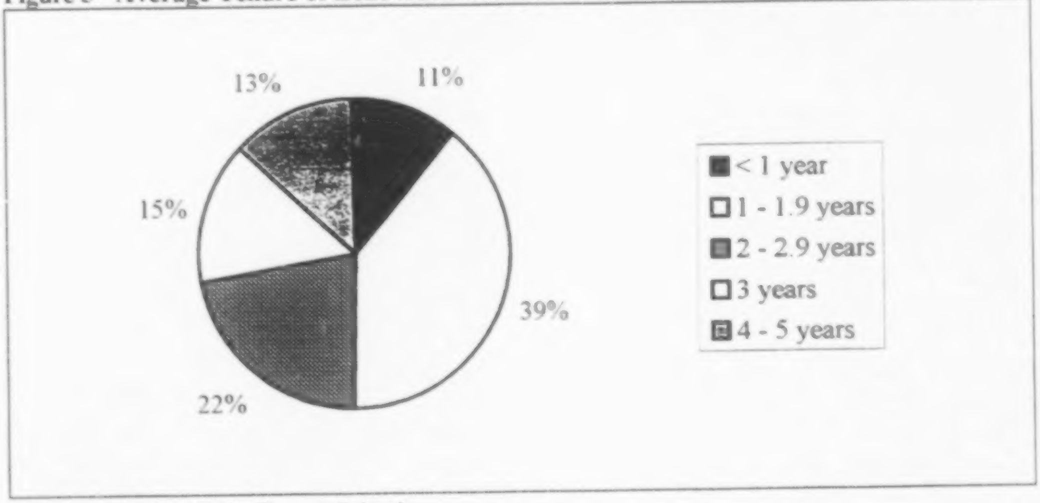
Forty six of the 51 schools in this study provided data related to the average tenure of their lead administrators. The average tenure was calculated by dividing the total number of years the school had been in operation by the total number of lead administrators employed by the school.

Of the 46 schools that provided 1998-99 data related to administrator tenure:

- 13% (six schools) had an average administrator tenure of four to five years,
- 15% (seven schools) had an average administrator tenure of three years,
- 22% (ten schools) had an average administrator tenure of 2.0 to 2.9 years,
- 39% (18 schools) had an average administrator tenure of 1.0 to 1.9 years, and
- 11% (five schools) had an average administrator tenure of less than one year.

The average tenure of lead administrators for the charter schools in this study was 2.2 years. The median tenure was 1.67 years.

Figure 5 - Average Tenure of Lead Administrator in Colorado Charter Schools, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

Effective Practice in School Governance and Administration

CDE asked the charter schools in this study, through the 1998-99 Charter Schools Evaluation Questionnaire, to identify the factors that contributed most to their success in the areas of school governance and administration. The responses are listed in order of the frequency with which the particular characteristic was cited by the charter schools in this study.

1. The clear delineation of authority between the board and the administration and a mutual respect for the other's role.
2. The quality of the administrator ("veteran", "curriculum leader", "knowledgeable", "dynamic", "experienced", "team-player", "decisive leader") and his/her commitment to the mission philosophy of the school.
3. The make-up of the governing board, in terms of overall composition and the expertise and backgrounds of the particular individuals who served on the board. Several schools mentioned that it had been very helpful to have board members with legal or financial backgrounds.
4. Parent involvement on the governing board and in the school.
5. Stable leadership at both the administrator and governing board level.
6. The existence of written policies and procedures, and well-defined protocols for governing board meetings.
7. Opportunities for board members to participate in training regarding their roles and responsibilities.
8. Shared decision making among all key stakeholder groups in the school.
9. Good working relationships with the authorizing district.

The following issues were mentioned by only one of the responding charter schools and may be unique to the context of that particular charter school:

- Use of a leadership team instead of a traditional administrator.
- Existence of an organization that serves as an umbrella for grant writing, interacting with other educational projects and philosophical guidance.
- Commitment to using a strategic planning process to address school needs.
- A formal grievance procedure is in place to handle concerns of parents and staff.

PART VI: PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

It is not an overstatement to say that without extensive parent leadership and commitment, the great majority of charter schools in this evaluation study would not have opened their doors and would not have operated at as high a performance level. This is not to say that all charter school parents could and wanted to participate. But many did and at high levels of responsibility and commitment.

The implications of creating new ways to engage parents are significant. Research has shown that parental involvement has a profound effect on student achievement. Students whose parents are involved in their education are more enthusiastic and confident learners and achieve at higher levels. Similarly, schools where parents are involved are more effective at meeting the needs of all students.[illegible]

Table 4 is designed to provide some insight into the extent and depth of parent involvement in charter schools. The table shows enrollment because the total number of hours contributed has meaning only in the context of the school's size. The age of the school also should be factored into consideration of this data. It has been fairly common to see greater parent involvement in the first years of operation due to the many additional demands associated with opening the school.

Table 4 - Parent Involvement in Charter Schools - 1998-99

Charter School (Authorizing District)	**Enrollment**	**Total Hours Volunteered by Parents/Families**	**% of Parents/Families That Volunteered**	**Administered Parent Satisfaction Survey?**
Classical Academy (Adams 50)	176	Approximately 1,600	33%	yes
Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12)	784	25,686	73%	yes
Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12)	619	2,700	15%	yes
Stargate Charter School (Adams 12)	241	2,200	75%	yes
Prarie Creeks Charter School (Bennett School District, et al)	8	school does not track this data	school does not track this data	no
Boulder Preparatory School (Boulder Valley)	34	300	50%	no
Horizons K-8 Alternative (Boulder Valley)	307	5,000	75%	yes
Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley)	254	17,000	60%	yes
Mountain View Charter (Canon City)	177	10,325	100%	yes
Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District)	449	12,000+	85%	yes
Cheyenne Mountain Academy (Cheyenne Mountain Dist. 12)	319	4,000+	25%	yes
CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)	107	not reported	not reported	not reported

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Table 4 (Continued) - Parent Involvement in Charter Schools 1998-99

Charter School (Authorizing District)	**Enrollment**	**Total Hours Volunteered by Parents/Families**	**% of Parents/Families That Volunteered**	**Administered Parent Satisfaction Survey?**
Community Prep (Colorado Springs District 11)	126	school does not track this data	school does not track this data	no
GLOBE (Colorado Springs District 11)	140	3,200	school does not track this data	yes
Roosevelt-Edison (Colorado Springs District 11)	985	7,000+	25%	yes
Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools)	311	not reported	not reported	not reported
P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)	233	school does not track this data	school does not track this data	yes
Academy Charter School (Douglas County)	348	11,300	64%	yes
Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County)	275	13,677	70%	yes
Core Knowledge Charter (Douglas County)	294	8,411	85%	yes
DSC Montessori School (Douglas County)	207	1,700	45%	yes
Platte River Academy (Douglas County)	359	14,000	90%	yes
Renaissance Charter (Douglas County)	286	10,500	92%	yes
Community of Learners (Durango 9-R)	140	not reported	not reported	not reported
EXCEL School (Durango 9-R)	103	3,287	73%	yes
Eagle County Charter (Eagle County)	166	6,000	95%	yes
Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)	156	8,000	60%	yes
Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed)	17	approximately 10 hours/week	100%	yes
Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County)	171	4,000	50%	yes
Community Involved (Jefferson County)	264	1,923	25%	yes
Excel Academy (Jefferson County)	110	school does not track this data	100%	yes
Jefferson Academy Elementary (Jefferson County)	306	11,759	school does not track this data	yes
Jefferson Academy Junior High (Jefferson County)	114	2,102	55%	yes
Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County)	209	1,110	56%	yes
Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County)	16	school does not track this data	school does not track this data	yes
Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County)	188	7,085	65%	yes
Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)	272	6,000	61%	yes
Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)	452	15,780	72%	yes

Table 4 (Continued) - Parent Involvement in Charter Schools - 1998-99

Charter School (Authorizing District)	**Enrollment**	**Total Hours Volunteered by Parents/Families**	**% of Parents/Families That Volunteered**	**Administered Parent Satisfaction Survey?**
Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated)	48	school does not track this data	school does not track this data	yes
Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez)	26	school does not track this data	100%	yes
Lake George - Guffey Charter (Park School District)	165	1,800	90%	yes
Liberty Common School (Poudre School District)	440	36,318	school does not track this data	yes
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences (Pueblo 60)	361	12,362	95%	yes
Youth & Family Academy (Pueblo 60)	87	not reported	not reported	not reported
Connect Charter School (Pueblo 70)	138	approximately 200	10%	no
Swallows Academy (Pueblo 70)	125	947	28%	yes
Aspen Community -Carbondale (Roaring Fork School District)	190	1,000+	100%	yes
Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District)	479	approximately 14,000	school does not track this data	yes
Frontier Academy (Weld District 6)	366	7,416	78%	yes
Union Colony Charter School (Weld District 6)	192	350	school does not track this data	yes
Crown Pointe Academy (Westminster 50)	176	11,000	96%	yes

Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

Parent Surveys

Of the 51 charter schools in this evaluation study, 47 provided information about their use of parent surveys or questionnaires. Forty three of these schools (94%) administered a parent survey on at least an annual basis. These surveys had the potential to contribute to accountability in at least two ways. First, they provided useful feedback to the schools from parents on a regular basis. Second, they offered an important source of information that potential patrons of a charter school could review as one measure of the school's effectiveness.

Parent Contracts

Of the 51 schools in this study, 46 schools provided information related to the use of parent contracts. Of the 46 schools reporting, 17 schools (37%) required a parent contract in 1998-99, and 29 schools (63%) did not. These contracts generally spelled out the school's expectations of parents related to their involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Why Do Charter School Parents Participate?

The questionnaire for the 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study elicited qualitative data about parent involvement. One question asked why charter school parents, as a group, tend to be more involved than parents in conventional public schools. The second question sought to identify effective practices related to parent involvement.

The respondents identified two major factors that contributed to high levels of involvement by charter school parents as a group. First was the notion that because parents engaged in a search to define the best educational setting for their children and sought out a particular school, they had a greater level of commitment to the school and its success. Representative comments from respondents included the following:

- "You value what you choose."
- "When parents chose an approach, they are committed to the school and want the school to succeed."
- "They choose to belong."
- "They believe in the school."

A related, but distinct, factor was the idea that parents participated more in charter schools because there were ample and diverse opportunities for involvement and they sensed that what they did made a difference in the life of the school and in the quality of their children's education. In the words of the respondents:

- "Parents are more involved because they have more input. Their voices are heard."
- "They see what they do makes a difference."
- "They have a voice and have influence over the academic, social and athletic lives of their children."
- "They are valued and encouraged to participate at all levels from formal governance to informal help in the classroom"
- "Participation is rewarding because it makes a difference and it's effective."
- "Parents know that they are valued."
- "As new enterprises, charter schools have great needs and many opportunities for volunteering.
- "Parents are welcomed as thinkers and decision makers."
- "Charter schools encourage involvement because they need help in a lot of areas (like facilities) that aren't issues at neighborhood public schools."
- "Our school recognizes that the parents' role is vital."

Respondents also mentioned the following factors as contributing to parent involvement in charter schools:

- Some charter schools set specific expectations for parent involvement in a written contract or school policy.
- The smaller size of charter schools (and in some rural communities, their closer proximity to the families they serve than conventional public schools) contributed to a sense of community that fostered parent involvement.
- Some families chose charter schools because their children did not have successful experiences in conventional public school settings. These families may have had a greater commitment to the school because of a sense that the school offered the student his or her "last chance" for success.

Effective Practices in Charter Schools to Promote Parent Involvement

The charter schools in this study identified the following strategies for increasing parent involvement. The strategies are listed in order of the number of respondents who identified the particular strategy as effective.

1. Engaged in frequent, friendly communication with parents. Specific strategies employed by the school included classroom or school newsletters, phone tree, coffees with principals, parent education materials or opportunities, open forums, all-school get-togethers, and regular conferences between teachers and parents. (15 schools)

2. Provided a range of opportunities that will fit different schedules, and take advantage of different parent interests and expertise. Worked to find places for all parents to volunteer in a capacity in which they felt comfortable. Provided some volunteer opportunities that could be completed at home. Sought out parents with the skills to fit a particular need of the school. (11 schools)

3. Used a volunteer coordinator (paid or volunteer) with responsibility for recruiting parents, matching them to opportunities for involvement and troubleshooting. (10 schools)

4. Used a parent contract to set expectations for parent involvement. (8 schools)

5. Made it easy for parents to identify opportunities for involvement and to sign-up to help. Strategies used in 1998-99 included volunteer request forms, a volunteer coupon book, tickets for time, and a volunteer open house. (7 schools)

6. Provided incentives and recognition for parent involvement. Examples included volunteer banquets (lunch, breakfast), formal recognition ceremonies, T-shirts or other small gifts, and publication of names of families who completed their volunteer commitment in the school newsletter. (7 schools)

7. Provided a welcoming environment and "open-door" access to administrators and classrooms. (5 schools)

8. Asked for help repeatedly and sincerely. They didn't assume parents knew that the school needed their time and skills. (3 schools)

9. Offered childcare and/or serve meals at school events to encourage attendance. (2 schools)

10. Provided volunteer training for parents, especially those working directly with students in the classroom. (2 schools)

Other strategies identified by a single school:

- Used volunteer networks to identify the special talents of parents.
- Offered programs that meet community needs such as before- and after-school care, summer trips, etc.
- Created needs for volunteers that fit with parents' strengths.
- Offered parent orientation for new families.
- Encouraged students to use their parents as mentors in elective coursework.
- Made home visits to families of new students.
- Ensured that the school has a presence at community events.

PART VII - DISCIPLINE IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

National and state polls continue to underscore the high priority that parents, staff and students give to issues related to school discipline and safe learning environments. Student suspensions and expulsions rates are the most commonly used indicators of school climate. The suspension and expulsion rates are a product of many factors, including the strictness of a school's discipline code, the population the school serves and the school's capacity (including adequate resources) to provide alternative learning opportunities for disruptive students.

Colorado state law defines the grounds for suspension or expulsion from public schools. These grounds include possessing a deadly weapon, selling a drug or controlled substance, committing a robbery or assault, disobedience and persistent defiance of proper authority, defacing school property, behavior on or off school property which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of pupils or of school personnel, and repeated interference with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.[illegible]

Charter School Discipline Policies

Of the 51 schools covered by the scope of this study, 46 provided information about their discipline code. Twenty one of these schools (46%) had adopted a discipline code different than the one adopted by their authorizing districts. The remaining 25 schools (54%) applied the discipline code of the authorizing district.

Student Suspensions

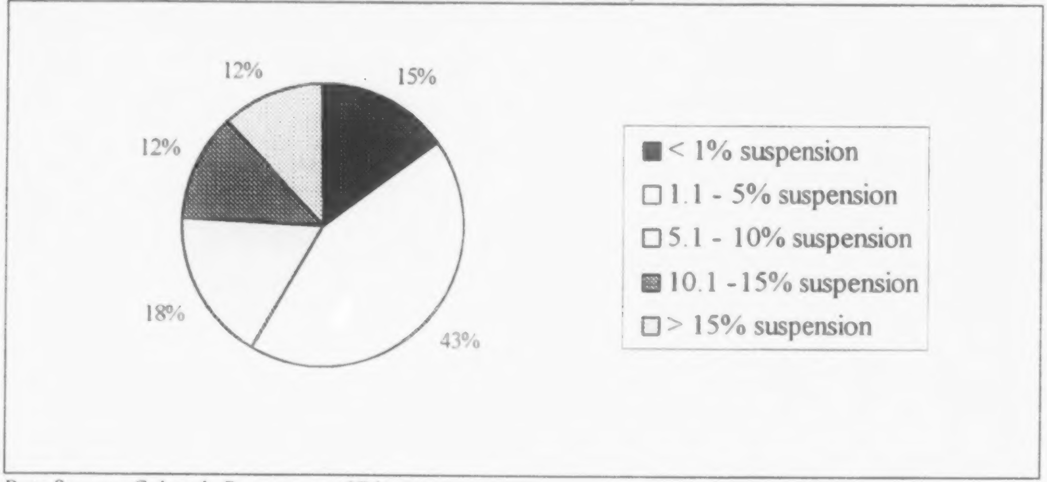
Colorado Department of Education database for the 1998-99 school year included data for 40 of the 51 schools in this study.

Of these 40 schools,

- 15% (six schools) had a suspension rate of less than 1 %,
- 43% (17 schools) had a suspension rate of 1.1% to 5.0%,
- 18% (seven schools) had a suspension rate of 5.1% to 10.0%,
- 12% (five schools) had a suspension rate of 10.1% to 15%, and
- 12% (five schools) had a suspension rate of over 15%.

The 1998-99 suspension rates for schools in this study ranged from 46.3% at Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) to 0% at many schools. Twenty four schools (60%) had a suspension rate that was equal to or less than the suspension rate for their authorizing districts. Fifteen schools (40%) exceeded the district average suspension. The average 1998-99 suspension rate of schools in the study was 8.5%. The median suspension rate was 4.4%.

Figure 6 - Suspension Rate in Colorado Charter Schools, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

Student Expulsions

Colorado Department of Education database for the 1998-99 school year included data for 40 of the 51 schools in this study related to the expulsion of students for discipline violations. Of these 40 schools:

- 80% (32 schools) had an expulsion rate of 0%.
- 8% (three schools) had an expulsion rate of less than 1%.
- 10% (four schools) had an expulsion rate of 1.1% to 2.0.
- 2% (one school) had an expulsion rate of over 2%

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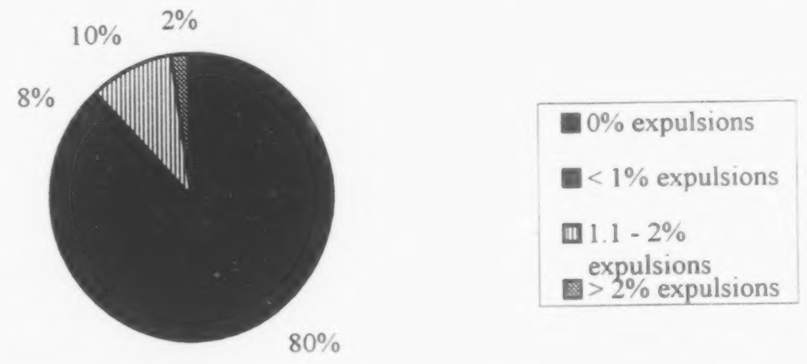
The 1998-99 expulsion rates for schools in this study ranged from 14.3% at Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts) to 0% at Classical Charter Academy (Academy School District), Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 School District), Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District), Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District), Mountain View Core Knowledge Charter School (Canon City School District), Cherry Creek Charter Academy (Cherry Creek School District), Cheyenne Mountain Charter School (Cheyenne Mountain School District), CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), GLOBE Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools), P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools), Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District), Colorado Visionary Charter Academy (Douglas County School District), Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District), DSC Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District), Platte River Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District), Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District), Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District), Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District), Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County School District), Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District), Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District), Lincoln Charter Academy (Jefferson County School District), Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District), Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District), Lake George - Guffey Charter School (Park School District), Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60), Aspen/Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District), Twin Peaks Charter Academy (St. Vrain School District), and Crown Pointe Charter Academy (Westminster School District 50) .

Of the 40 schools reporting data, 34 schools (85%) had an expulsion rate that was equal to or less than the suspension rate for their authorizing districts. Six schools (15 %) in the study exceeded the district average rate of expulsions. The average 1998-99 expulsion rate of the charter schools in the study was 0.5%. The median expulsion rate was 0%.

Figure 8 - Expulsion Rate in Colorado Charter Schools, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

PART VIII - COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Teacher Salaries, Education and Experience

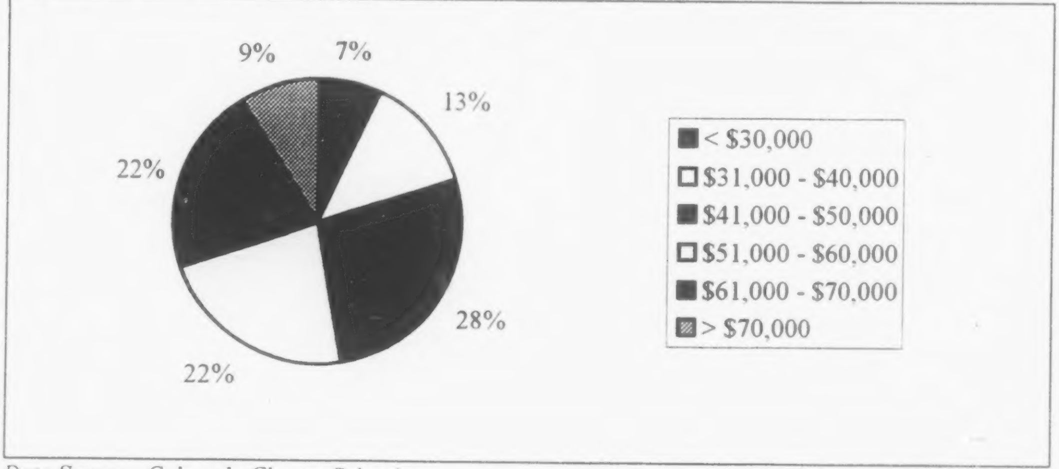
Data related to charter school teacher salaries, educational attainment (expressed as the percentage of teachers who have obtained Masters' Degrees) and experience were not collected by CDE for the 1998-99 school year because the Automated Data Collection Project was being piloted at the time. In past evaluation studies, the average salaries, prior teaching experience and educational attainment of charter school teachers consistently were less than state averages.

Administrator Salaries

Forty six of the 51 charter schools in this study provided 1998-99 information about the salaries of their lead administrators. Of these 46 schools:

- 7% of charter school administrators (3 schools) had annual salaries of less than $30,000,
- 13% (6 schools) had salaries of between $31,000 and $40,000,
- 28% (13 schools) had salaries of between $41,000 and $50,000,
- 22% (ten schools) had salaries of between $51,000 and $60,000,
- 22% (ten schools) had salaries of between $61,000 and $70,000, and
- 9% (four schools) had salaries of over $70,000.

Figure 8 - Salaries of Lead Charter School Administrators, 1998-99



Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

The salaries of the charter school lead administrators in this study ranged from $27,400 at Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Trail School Districts) to $80,000 at Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District). The average 1998-99 salary for charter school administrators was $50,500 and the median salary was $55,000.

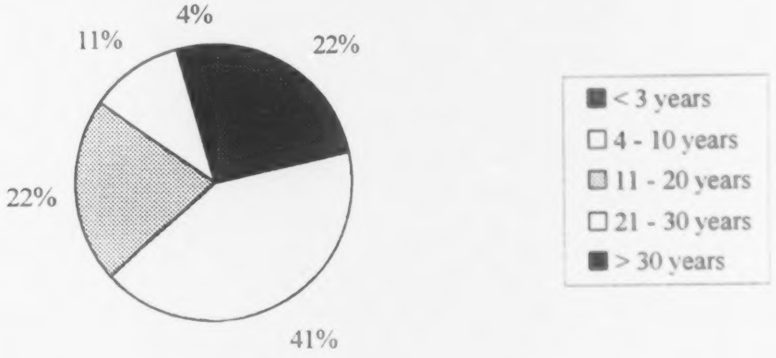
Administrator Experience

The charter schools included in this study employed lead administrators with a broad range of prior experience in educational settings. Forty six of the 51 charter schools in this study provided information about the experience of their lead administrators in the field of education. Of this total:

- 22% of charter school administrators (10 schools) had less than three years experience.
- 41% of charter school administrators (19 schools) had between four and ten years of experience.
- 22% of charter school administrators (11 schools) had between 11 and 20 years of experience.
- 11% of charter school administrators (five schools) had between 21 and 30 years of experience.
- 4% of charter school administrators (two schools) had over 30 years of experience.

Experience of lead administrators ranged from no prior educational experience at Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District) to 33 years of educational experience at Lake George-Guffey Charter School (Park School District). Administrators of charter schools in this study had an average of 11 years of experience in the field of education (in private, public or charter schools). The median experience of lead administrators was eight years.

Figure 9 - Educational Experience of Charter School Lead Administrators, 1998-99



Data source: Colorado Charter Schools

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PART VIII - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Overview

At the core of the Colorado Charter Schools Act are two central goals: to provide charter sculls with significant autonomy in order to promote innovation and effective practices and to hold charter schools accountable for the results they achieve. These goals are in direct tension when it comes to *state-level* efforts to evaluate the progress of charter schools as a whole, especially in any comparative way. In short, the diversity and autonomy that the Charter Schools Act intended to promote is incompatible to the standardization required for direct comparisons.

To balance the need for accountability against the reality of the autonomy that schools were exercising under the Act, this study takes a multidimensional approach to evaluating the performance of charter schools. The study reviews performance on five different indicators or categories of information:

1. ***The schools' performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program.*** CSAP scores are presented in two ways: (1) the performance of individual schools on CSAP over time and (2) the performance of the charter schools, as a whole, compared to the state, to the performance of the authorizing district, and to the performance of other public schools that serve students of the same general socioeconomic level. CSAP scores are available for 39 of the 51 schools in the study – those schools that offered a 3, 4th or 7th grade program in 1998-99 and that administered the test to 16 or more students.
2. As schools of choice, charter school performance also fairly can be measured by *market-based indicators*, such as the demand for the school (waiting lists), parent satisfaction, and re-enrollment rates.
3. A third measure of school performance and commitment to accountability is the schools' attainment of the Colorado Department of Education's *designation as Schools of Excellence or Challenger* Schools.
4. The *renewal record* of the charter schools signals the satisfaction of authorizing districts that the charter schools were meeting the terms of their charters, including the standards for performance.
5. Tracking the *progress made by individual schools against their own unique performance goals* provides the most complete picture of school performance.

The Educational Accreditation Act of 1998[42] required the State Board of Education to implement a public school accreditation process that focuses on student achievement of state content standards. Local boards of education will contract with the Colorado State Board of Education to administer the accreditation process for each school in the district. State law requires local boards of education to report progress annually, in writing, on the following accreditation indicators:

- results of statewide assessments (CSAP),
- dropout rates,
- student attendance rates,
- numbers of expelled and suspended students,
- graduation rates,
- percent of student taking advanced placement courses,
- percent of students taking statewide assessments,
- percent of students exempt from the assessment program, and
- results of school district standards-based assessments.

As this new accreditation system is fully implemented, it may have an impact on the way that charter applications are negotiated between authorizing districts and charter school applications. It will certainly have an impact on the type of data that charter schools are obliged to report to their authorizing districts for accountability purposes. Over the next several years, the focus of the statewide evaluation of charter schools likely will shift to the schools' performance on the accreditation indicators.

Colorado Student Assessment Program

BACKGROUND

In 1993, the Colorado General Assembly adopted a standards-driven system of education with the passage of H.B. 1313. This legislation, which enjoyed strong bipartisan support, requires all local school districts to establish clearly defined content standards. Standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do in each major content area at various points in their academic careers. The law allows each district to establish its own standards, but these standards must be as rigorous as – that is, "meet or exceed" – a set of model content standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is a statewide assessment, aligned with the state model content standards, that covers limited grades and subjects each year. The state assessment program began in April 1997, testing all fourth grade students in reading and writing. In spring 1998, fourth grade reading and writing was tested again and third grade reading comprehension was added. Tests in seventh grade reading and writing were administered for the first time in spring 1999. Additional assessments will be added progressively: fifth grade math in fall 1999; eighth grade math and science in spring 2000; tenth grade reading, writing and math in spring 2001.

The Colorado Department of Education reports CSAP results using four performance levels:

- Unsatisfactory
- Partially proficient – does not meet the standards
- Proficient - meets the standards
- Advanced - exceeds the standards.

A student classified as proficient is considered to have met the State Model Content Standards in the subject tested.

Spring 1999 CSAP results, listed in Table 6, were available for 39 of the 51 charter schools in this study. Five of the charter schools in this study did not participate in the 1999 CSAP because they did not serve students in the 3rd, 4th or 7th grade: Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts), Boulder Preparatory High School (Boulder Valley School District) CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11), and Union Colony Charter School (Weld School District 6).

Another seven charter schools in this evaluation study administered the CSAP but cannot report their results publicly. As a matter of policy, CDE does not report the results for schools in which 16 or fewer students took the test, out of concern that scores may be identifiable to individual students. The schools in this category were: GLOBE (Colorado Springs District 11), Community of Learners (Durango 9-R), Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District), Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District), Magnet School for the Deaf (Jefferson County), Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District), and Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez School District).

The charter schools in this evaluation study, as a whole, outperformed both the state and their authorizing districts on all CSAP assessments. The charter schools also outperformed other public schools with student populations of the same general socioeconomic level.[43] A breakdown of these comparisons follows.

3RD GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 29

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 77% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 67%.

Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Horizons K-8 Alternative School, Boulder Valley School District)
Low: 9% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 76% (22 of 29 schools).

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 79% (23 of 29 schools).

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 62% (18 of 29 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge charter schools that administered the 3rd grade reading assessment, 16 exceeded the state average, 18 exceeded the authorizing district average and 13 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, one exceeded the authorizing district average and one exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

4th GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 73% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 59%.

Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Stargate Charter School, Adams 12 School District)
Low: 8% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 82% (23 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 68% (19 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge charter schools that administered the 4th grade reading assessment, 17 exceeded the state average, 18 exceeded the authorizing district average and 17 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, none exceeded the authorizing district average and one exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

4th GRADE WRITING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 49% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 34%.

Range: High: 79% proficient or above (Liberty Common School, Poudre School District)
Low: 0% proficient or above (Pioneer Charter School, Denver Public Schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 71% (20 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 19 Core Knowledge charter schools that administered the 4th grade writing assessment, 15 exceeded the state average, 16 exceeded the authorizing district average and 15 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: Of the two Paideia schools that administered this assessment, one exceeded the state average, one exceeded the authorizing district average and one exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

7th GRADE READING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 66% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 56%.

Range: High: 100% proficient or above (Cheyenne Mountain Charter School, Cheyenne Mountain School District)
Low: 6% proficient or above (Youth and Family Academy, Pueblo School District 60

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 61% (17 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 61% (17 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 17 Core Knowledge charter schools that administered the 7th grade reading assessment, 10 exceeded the state average, nine exceeded the authorizing district average and nine exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: The one Paideia school that administered this assessment met the state average, exceeded the authorizing district average and exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level

7th GRADE WRITING

Number of Charter Schools in the Study Reporting: 28

Average Performance Level: The average performance level for the charter schools in this study was 57% proficient or above, compared to a state average of 41%.

Range: High: 96% proficient or above (Cheyenne Mountain Charter School, Cheyenne Mountain School District)
Low: 0% proficient or above (Youth and Family Academy, Pueblo School District 60)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded State Average: 68% (19 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Met or Exceeded Authorizing District Average: 75% (21 of 28 schools)

Percentage of Schools with Performance Levels that Exceeded the Average of All Schools in the same SES Level: 68% (19 of 28 schools)

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 17 Core Knowledge charter schools that administered the 7th grade writing assessment, 13 exceeded the state average, 13 exceeded the authorizing district average and 12 exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level.

Paideia Cohort: The one Paideia school that administered this assessment exceeded the state average, exceeded the authorizing district average and exceeded the average of all schools in the same SES level

Table 5 - 1999 CSAP Results for Colorado Charter Schools

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**3rd Grade Reading**	**4th Grade Reading** **4th Grade Writing**	**7th Grade Reading** **7th Grade Writing**
State of Colorado	*67%*	*59%* *34%*	*56%* *41%*
Academy School District 20	*83%*	*78%* *49%*	*76%* *64%*
The Classical Academy	82%	85% 62%	70% 72%
Adams 12 District	*58%*	*51%* *31%*	*52%* *34%*
Academy of Charter Schools	62%	48% 25%	42% 39%
Pinnacle Charter School	64%	55% 30%	39% 39%
Stargate	86%	100% 77%	98% 95%
Boulder Valley School District	*79%*	*76%* *46%*	*71%* *61%*
Horizons K-8 Alternative School	100%	87% 54%	94% 83%
Summit Middle School	not administered	not administered	96% 94%
Canon City School District	*71%*	*58%* *28%*	
Mountain View Core Knowledge	72%	76% 52%	not administered
Cherry Creek School District	*77%*	*72%* *49%*	*68%* *54%*
Cherry Creek Academy	94%	87% 73%	79% 69%

Table 5 (Cont.) - 1999 CSAP Results for Colorado Charter Schools

DISTRICT Charter School	3rd Grade Reading	4th Grade Reading 4th Grade Writing	7th Grade Reading 7th Grade Writing
Cheyenne Mountain District 12	*90%*	*84%* *59%*	*81%* *67%*
Cheyenne Mountain Charter	91%	83% 64%	100% 96%
Roosevelt-Edison	49%	37% 18%	21% 12%
Denver Public Schools	*43%*	*32%* *10%*	*32%* *19%*
Pioneer Charter School	9%	8% 0%	not administered
P.S. 1	not administered	not administered	35% 21%
Douglas County School District	*81%*	*74%* *49%*	*70%* *60%*
Academy Charter	86%	76% 51%	65% 58%
Colorado Visionary Academy	93%	61% 39%	not reported - less than 16 students took test
Core Knowledge	90%	90% 68%	83% 70%
DSC Montessori School	81%	not reported - less than 16 students took test	not reported - less than 16 students took test
Platte River Academy Charter	85%	73% 58%	77% 73%
Renaissance Charter	83%	77% 43%	63% 38%
Durango School District 9-R			*69%* *52%*
EXCEL School	not administered	not administered	71% 67%
Eagle County School District			*54%* *37%*
Eagle County Charter	not administered	not administered	53% 38%
Elizabeth School District	*74%*	*70%* *39%*	*69%* *55%*
Elbert County Charter School	77%	64% 50%	67% 54%
Jefferson County School District	*71%*	*64%* *35%*	*62%* *43%*
Collegiate Academy	not administered	not administered	71% 39%
Community Involved	not reported - less than 16 students took test	not reported - less than 16 students took test	32% 11%
Jefferson Academy - Elem.	88%	89% 64%	not administered
Jefferson Academy Jr. High	not administered	not administered	83% 68%
Lincoln Academy	96%	85% 58%	not administered
Montessori Peaks Academy	50%	not reported - less than 16 students took test	not administered

Table 5 (Cont.) - 1999 CSAP Results for Colorado Charter Schools

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**3rd Grade Reading**	**4th Grade Reading** **4th Grade Writing**	**7th Grade Reading** **7th Grade Writing**
Lewis Palmer School District	83%	79% 53%	72% 58%
Lewis Palmer Charter Acad.	77%	92% 69%	83% 66%
Littleton School District	75%	73% 46%	70% 59%
Littleton Academy	88%	80% 51%	76% 66%
Park County School District	51%	64% 32%	
Lake George - Guffey	68%	63% 32%	not administered
Poudre School District	76%	73% 50%	68% 50%
Liberty Common Charter	87%	91% 79%	85% 72%
Pueblo School District 60	60%	57% 31%	44% 30%
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	63%	44% 28%	56% 47%
Youth and Family Academy	not administered	not administered	6% 0%
Pueblo School District 70	75%	66% 34%	61% 50%
Connect Charter School	not administered	not administered	73% 69%
Swallows Academy	not administered	80% 55%	61% 72%
Roaring Fork School District	69%	63% 25%	
Aspen/Carbondale Community School	77%	65% 10%	not reported - less than 16 students took test
St. Vrain School District	76%	66% 42%	59% 45%
Twin Peaks Charter School	81%	85% 65%	56% 58%
Weld School District 6	53%	51% 29%	
Frontier Academy	62%	58% 30%	not administered
Westminster School District 50	58%	39% 20%	
Crown Pointe Academy	52%	79% 58%	not administered

Charter School Participation in Schools of Excellence/Challenger Schools Program

These designations represent the only statutory statewide recognition program of Colorado schools by the Colorado Department of Education. Every public school is eligible to apply. The 51 charter schools in this study represented 3.2 % of the total number of public schools in the state of Colorado. Yet, they comprised 21% of the Colorado Schools of Excellence and 50% of the Commissioner's Challenger Schools.

The State Board of Education selected the John Irwin Colorado Schools of Excellence from the 1998 Commissioner's Challenger Schools based on two-year records of outstanding accomplishment, supported by multiple assessments of student performance, community satisfaction and demonstration of effective school practices. Recommendations for recognition were received from the State School Performance Awards Panel. Among the six schools who received this designation in 1999 were three charter schools:

- Horizons K-8 Alternative Charter School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary Charter School (Jefferson County School District)

The State Board of Education designated 45 schools as Commissioner's Challenger Schools during 1998-99. These schools have contracted to show two-year records of outstanding student performance related to the State Board goals, assessed through a combination of performance-based, criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments. In addition, the school have contracted to target community satisfaction and effective school practices. Ten charter schools in this study received designation as Challenger Schools:

- Horizons K-8 Alternative Charter School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain 12)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County)
- Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County)
- Eagle County Charter Academy (Eagle County)
- Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary Charter School (Jefferson County)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo District 60)
- The Connect School (Pueblo District 70)

Market-Based Indicators

As schools of choice, charter schools also can be measured by market-based indicators, such as the demand for the school (waiting lists), parent satisfaction and re-enrollment rates. This study reports data related to these indicators for individual schools as part of their school profiles.

Based on information provided by 48 of the 51 schools in this evaluation study:

- None of the schools experienced enrollment levels under planned capacity in 1998-99. The great majority of schools had waiting lists, in some cases, very extensive ones.

- Parent satisfaction and teacher satisfaction were reported at generally high levels.

- While a few schools struggled to maintain stable enrollment, the majority of schools came close to or exceeded their goals for re-enrollment. Alpine Charter School, which closed in fall of 1999 due to declining enrollment, was the exception to this rule.

Charter Renewals/Closures

Forty-six of the 51 schools in this study provided information about their renewal status. Of this total, 22 schools already have sought a renewal of their charter contract by the authorizing district.

All of these schools successfully completed the renewal process. In all but one instance, the term of the charter renewal was equal to or greater than the original term of the charter. The exception, Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District), was originally awarded a three-year charter. Its charter subsequently was renewed for one year. Upon further review by the authorizing district, the school's charter was renewed for a five-year term, with an audit in the third year.

The process used by authorizing districts to consider the renewal of a charter varies on a district-by-district basis. The range of renewal activities completed by schools in this study included:

- Completion of a renewal application with a question and response format requiring extensive attachments.
- Negotiations with district officials.
- Public hearings.
- An outside educational audit.
- A site review by district review team.
- Completion of a renewal criteria checklist addressed to five major areas: Academics, Goals and Objectives, Financial, Administration and Governance and Accountability.

In the nearly six years of the Colorado Charter Schools Act's operation, only two charter schools have closed, both voluntarily. The Clayton Charter School (Denver Public Schools) closed at the end of the 1996-97 school year after three years of operation. The discontinuation of the school was prompted by the decision of the Denver Public Schools to establish its own charter school in the same service area. In October 1999, the Alpine Charter School (Summit School District) closed as a result of declining enrollment. Concerns about its upcoming renewal process apparently contributed to the school's decision to close.

The Record of Charter Schools in Achieving their own Performance Goals

This section of the study presents the record of charter schools in achieving performance goals that the schools themselves articulated and using assessment tools that the schools chose (or agreed with the authorizing district to administer).

The Charter Schools Act requires that any charter school application articulate the school's performance goals for students and measurable objectives for student growth. The Act also requires the application to spell out the methods that the charter school will use to assess and report on student progress.[44]

In Colorado, the discretion to approve a charter school's performance goals and its plan for assessing and reporting the academic progress of students lies with individual authorizing districts, not a single chartering organization. Not surprisingly, then, the nature and content of the schools' performance goals vary broadly. Some charter schools in this study developed applications that contained very specific performance standards and measurable objectives related to student performance. The applications from other schools contained goals and objectives that were more qualitative and more difficult to measure. However, the approval of the charters indicated the adequacy of the identified goals, performance standards, and assessment methods, at least in the eyes of the authorizing district.

As the charter schools became operational, they updated and refined their performance goals on a regular basis through the school improvement planning process. All public schools (including charter schools) are required to participate in the school improvement planning process.[45] The formats applied by charter schools in the school improvement planning process again varied depending on the requirements of the authorizing district.

Given the fact that charter schools had unique performance goals and different approaches to measuring progress toward those goals, the evaluation study presents performance data for each school individually using a two-page school profile. The first page of each profile summarizes key demographic data about the school and lists the school's mission, educational approach, governance structure and performance goals. The second page presents student assessment data and data on other performance indicators over time. The profiles do not describe the universe of assessment activities that occurred in the charter schools during the 1998-99 school year. They only reflect those indicators that were reported by the charter schools in their annual school improvement plans or in the materials they submitted for this evaluation study.

All data shown in the school profiles, including the demographic data, were from the 1998-99 academic year. The demographic data was obtained from the CDE database and reflected the schools' status as of October "count day" 1998. The number of students on the waiting list and the school performance and student achievement data were self-reported by the charter schools.

The following questions provide a qualitative framework for evaluating the data presented in the school profiles:

- *Did the school set high goals for student achievement?* Unless the goals themselves are worthy, their accomplishment does not necessarily translate into improved learning results for students.
- *Were the school's goals consistent with its mission and distinctive educational approach?* The most authentic performance goals measure what matters most to the school community.

- *Were the school's goals measurable? Did the school use assessment tools that were capable of measuring the goals?* In this regard, recognize that it is much easier for a Core Knowledge school to identify assessments that can measure its curriculum, than a school that is pursuing a less structured program. For example, most Core Knowledge schools would consider the results of norm-referenced tests to be a fair indicator of their progress. Alternative schools would not. Several schools in this report administer the ITBS only at the request of their authorizing districts. These schools do not accept the results as valid in light of the non-alignment between this assessment and the schools' educational program.

- *What were the school's demographics?* Schools that served a high percentage of students who were at risk of under-achievement because of economic disadvantage or special needs faced a very different set of challenges than the schools that served a lower percentage of those students.

- *Did the assessment data reflect progress over time?* It is useful to consider the assessment data in terms of growth, and not just at a particular point in time. The same numerical score on a particular assessment may indicate marked improvement in one school and static performance in another, simply because the schools may have started from dramatically different baselines.

- *Did the assessment data report progress of the same cohort of students?* Most schools reported assessment data by grade levels. These data showed the performance of a first grade class one year against the performance of a different first grade class the second year; they did not track the performance of a cohort of students over time.

- *How large is the school? How many students took the assessment?* In small schools where only a few students take a particular assessment, the results are much less reliable than with a larger sample. In cases where the sample (the number of students taking the test) is small, the performance of a single student can have a dramatic impact on the results for a grade level or for an entire school. For the same reason, it is very difficult to track student achievement over time when only a handful of students take the tests each year.

CLASSICAL ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Academy School District 20

Location:	Colorado Springs (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	17.2
Enrollment:	460	**Percent Minority:**	7.6%
Grade Levels:	K-7		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	770	**Percent Special Education:**	2.6%

MISSION: The Classical Academy exists to assist parents in their mission to develop exemplary young citizens with superior academic preparation, equipped with analytical thinking skills, a passion for learning and virtuous character, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Core Knowledge Sequence clearly defines the core content standards and is the instruction program framework. The curriculum is enriched by classical subjects (Latin, logic and rhetoric) and classical methodologies. These methodologies include the Socratic method, the use of time-honored literature and use of field-specific "classics" to inspire students and give them an appreciation for excellence.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of seven parents and a non-voting principal. The Board is responsible for determining the school policies. The principal and assistant principal are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The attendance rate will meet or exceed the School District 20 average and the state goal of 95%.
- The graduation rate will meet or exceed the state goal of 90%.
- Students will meet or exceed district and state content standards, as measured by teacher assessment, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Colorado Student Assessment Program.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National Percentile Rank Composite Score	**3rd grade:** 69 **5th grade:** 91	**3rd grade:** 70 **5th grade:** 73
Attendance Rate	not available	97.5%
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**3rd grade reading:** 72% proficient or above (80% district average) **4th grade reading:** 76% proficient or above (74% district average) **4th grade writing**: 71% proficient or above (50% district average)	**3rd grade reading:** 82% proficient or above (83% district average) **4th grade reading:** 85% proficient or above (78% district average) **4th grade writing**: 75% proficient or above (49% district average) **7th grade reading:** 70% proficient or above (76% district average) **7th grade writing:** 72% proficient or above (64% district average)

ACADEMY OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Sponsoring District: Adams 12 School District

Location: Denver (suburban)
Enrollment: 784
Grade Levels: K-12
Opening Date: Fall 1994
Waiting List: 168

Student/Teacher Ratio: 18.8
Percent Minority: 27.9%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 24.5%
Percent Special Education: 3.4%

MISSION: Our mission is to offer students with a variety of learning and communication styles (kindergarten through 12th grade), the opportunity, within a safe and structured environment, to excel at a challenging course of study through testing, placement and quality instruction that develops his or her talents in areas such as phonics, literature, penmanship, writing, speech, language, logic, civics, history, geography, research and computer skills, math, scientific methods, arts, music and physical education. We recognize self-esteem comes with accomplishment and achievement; therefore, we will provide opportunity for personal growth through academic achievement. We view parental satisfaction with our program and accomplishments as a gauge of our success; therefore, we require active parent involvement.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Academy of Charter Schools operates as a back to basics school emphasizing academics in a safe environment. The Academy uses the Core Knowledge Curriculum by E. D. Hirsch, which offers a planned progression of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts and fine arts. It represents a first and ongoing attempt to state specifically a core of shared knowledge that children should learn in American schools. The Core Knowledge Sequence is not a list of facts to be memorized. Rather, it is a guide to coherent content from grade to grade, designed to encourage steady academic progress as children build their knowledge and skills from one year to the next. The Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by its specificity. Moreover, because the Sequence offers a coherent plan that builds year by year, it helps prevent repetitions and gaps in instruction that result from vague curricular guidelines.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of nine parents, makes policy decisions for the school. The Executive Director makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students who have attended Academy for three years or more will score in the 65-75 percentile on nationally-normed tests.
- Average test scores for students will increase by at least five percentile points.
- The school will attain an attendance rate of at least 95% for elementary and 92% for secondary grade levels.
- Parents and community members will contribute over 15,000 hours of volunteer time annually.
- 90% of parents, staff, community, students will be satisfied with the school.
- Every graduating student will be prepared for college (college remediation courses will not be necessary).
- 80% or more of students who have attended Academy two years or more will graduate.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National percentile rank Tests were administered in spring of the designated school year 50% is the national average	*Reading* *Language* K-6 53 50 7-8 56 51 9-11 52 na School 54 50 (all students) *Math* *Soc. Studies* K-6 55 46 7-8 57 52 9-11 54 53 School 55 49 *Science* *Composite* K-6 54 51 7-8 51 52 9-11 55 53 School 53 52	*Reading* *Language* K-6 51 52 7-8 55 47 9-12 55 na School 53 50 (all students) *Math* *Soc. Studies* K-6 54 46 7-8 54 50 9-12 56 57 School 54 50 *Science* *Composite* K-6 51 49 7-8 54 50 9-12 59 56 School 54 51	*Reading* *Language* K-6 54 48 7-8 53 50 9-12 56 na School 54 49 (all students) *Math* *Soc. Studies* K-6 51 44 7-8 50 54 9-12 60 57 School 54 49 *Science* *Composite* K-6 51 49 7-8 50 50 9-12 59 58 School 53 51
ITBS **Longitudinal Data** Data shown are Pretest/Post-test scores for students who attended Academy of Charter Schools for more than 3 years as of Spring 1998. (Pretest represents the entering test scores of students. Post-test represents Spring 1998 scores.)		*Reading* *Language* K-6 63 64 7-8 61 58 9-12 57 na School 61 61 *Math* *Soc. Studies* K-6 66 53 7-8 61 56 9-12 64 64 School 64 57 *Science* *Composite* K-6 60 61 7-8 57 57 9-12 63 63 School 60 60	*Reading* *Language* K-6 58 57 7-8 58 55 9-12 61 na School 59 56 *Math* *Soc. Studies* K-6 61 50 7-8 61 59 9-12 66 60 School 63 55 *Science* *Composite* K-6 58 56 7-8 54 56 9-12 64 63 School 59 58
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 48% proficient or above (49% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 22% proficient or above (24% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 61.9% proficient or above (51% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 42.9% proficient or above (30% district average) **Third grade reading:** 70.3% proficient or above (58% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading** **Writing** **3rd grade** **school** 62% **district** 58% **4th grade** **school** 48% 25% **district** 51% 31% **7th grade** **school** 42% 39% **district** 52% 34%
Parent Survey on Teacher Performance On 5 point scale, 5 being the highest	Overall Score - 4.31 (68% of parents responded to the survey)	Overall Score - 4.02 (42% of parents responded to the survey)	Overall score - 4.25 (31% of all parents responded to the survey)
Parent Involvement	Over 19,900 hours	Over 20,995 hours	Over 25,686 hours
Attendance Rate	92.8%	94.2%	93.4%
Graduation Rate	100%	78.6% (Rate is 91.7% for students who attended Academy for more than one year)	91.3% (95.6% for students who attended Academy for more than one year)

PINNACLE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Adams 12 School District

Location:	Thornton (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	22.6
Enrollment:	619	**Percent Minority:**	27.9%
Grade Levels:	K - 10		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	14.7%
Waiting List:	250	**Percent Special Education:**	4.2%

MISSION: Our mission is to offer all students the opportunity to excel at a traditional course of study within a safe and structured environment. Self-esteem comes with accomplishment; therefore, students will be provided the opportunity for personal growth through academic achievement. Parent involvement is encouraged in the academic process.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Pinnacle has adopted the E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Core-Knowledge curriculum and Saxon math. The Core Knowledge Sequence is a planned progression of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts and fine arts. It is a guide to coherent content from grade to grade, designed to encourage steady academic progress as children build their knowledge and skills from one year to the next. The Core Knowledge Sequence and Saxon math are distinguished by their specificity. The specific content in the Sequence provides a solid foundation on which to build skill instruction. Moreover, its use helps prevent the many repetitions and gaps in instruction that can result from vague curricular guidelines.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Council is comprised of two parents and/or community members, one District 12 representative, the Academic Director/Principal and the Business Director. The Governing Council is responsible for determining the school policies. The Academic Director and the Business Director are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Use an evaluation process to assess student progress and progress of our academic mission.
- Improve student performance on nationally normed tests to the extent that such tests are compatible with our academic mission.
- Provide a safe and structured environment.
- Provide opportunity for personal growth through academic achievement.
- Accept students as they apply, subject to classroom space available.
- Provide post-high school options to all graduating students, including college and career paths.
- Increase parent involvement in the academic process.
- Continue to use an evaluation process to assess and improve student progress in reading and mathematics.

MEASURE	1997-98		1998-99	
	Math	**Reading**	**Math**	**Reading**
Achievement Level Test Scores shown are for Pinnacle and for the sponsoring district (in parenthesis)				
Grade 3	203 (195)	202 (195)	199 (197)	198 (196)
Grade 4	207 (206)	206 (203)	212 (206)	209 (204)
Grade 5	210 (212)	207 (210)	214 (212)	212 (210)
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 52% proficient or above (51% district average) **Fourth grade writing:** 21% proficient or above (30% district average)		**Fourth grade reading:** 30% proficient or above (51% district average) **Fourth grade writing:** 30% proficient or above (31% district average) **Third grade reading:** 64% proficient or above (58% district average)	
California Achievement Test (CAT5)	3rd grade	7th grade	3rd grade	7th grade
National percentile rank	64	53	59	64
Attendance Rate	93%		96.4%	
Dropout Rate	0%		0%	
Parent Satisfaction (% of parents who believe school achieved instructional effectiveness)	95%		94%	

STARGATE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Adams 12 School District

Location:	Northglenn (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	21:1
Enrollment:	241	**Percent Minority:**	20.3%
Grade Levels:	1-8*		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	1.7%
Waiting List:	Not reported	**Percent Special Education:**	2.5%

* Stargate serves middle school students with a "School-within-a-School" program located at Thornton Middle School.

MISSION: We believe each child is entitled to an education commensurate with his/her ability to learn. Our purpose is to create a charter school with multi-district enrollment to serve those children whose academic and/or intellectual abilities require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. This differentiated educational program will be designed regardless of disability, race, creed, color or gender, national origin, religion or ancestry so that these children can realize their contribution to self and society.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Stargate uses District Twelve curriculum, but teachers use different and innovative instructional strategies for gifted students. The school features foreign language at all levels, personal learning plans, multi-aged classrooms and direct parent involvement.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Council (comprised of four parents and two staff members) makes policy for the school. The school's Executive Director and Director of Operations are responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Assure that every student is working at his or her ability level in reading and math based on individual CAT-V and performance level assessments.
- Meet or exceed state model content standards.
- Maintain CAT-V scores at 90% or above.
- Maintain or exceed an attendance rate of 95%.
- Achieve a 95% retention rate.
- 80% of third and fourth graders will score at the proficient level or above on the CSAP.
- Maintain a high level of parent satisfaction.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
California Achievement Test (CAT-V) National percentile rank. Scores are shown for Stargate/District 12	3rd grade 7th grade Math: 92/62 92/55 Reading: 86/59 92/53 Sciences: 93/60 95/61 Soc. Sci.: 83/61 89/54 Language: 88/60 91/52 Overall: 90/61 93/53	3rd grade 7th grade Math: 94/70 91/66 Reading: 93/63 95/59 Sciences: 96/65 96/64 Soc. Sci.: 86/64 94/60 Language: 85/59 95/55 Overall: 94/65 97/61	3rd grade 7th grade Math: 93/69 85/65 Reading: 86/61 93/59 Sciences: 90/61 94/64 Soc. Sci.: 81/62 92/59 Language: 85/59 91/56 Overall: 88/65 92/61
District Performance Assessment Scores shown are for Stargate students/district average	3rd 4th 5th **Math Communication** 85/47 78/61 76/51 **Problem Solving** 88/66 96/63 76/45 **Science Communication** 72/53 58/39 76/45 **Problem Solving** 92/72 92/74 88/68 **Writing Content** 63/63 85/60 76/61 **Originality** 63/60 85/58 88/56 **Style** 63/52 85/48 84/47 **Editing** 48/50 78/61 80/54	3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th **Math Communication** na 85/63 na 77/63 92/55 **Problem Solving** na 85/70 na 92/69 92/50 **Science Communication** 83/55 na na 54/51 85/57 **Problem Solving** 97/74 na na 82/55 85/55 **Writing Content** na na 54/55 68/49 92/64 **Originality** na na 61/41 54/44 46/54 **Style** na na 61/41 54/44 46/54 **Editing** na na 82/47 87/50 100/50	3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th **Math Communication** 86/87 100/63 89 77/63 92/55 **Problem Solving** 77/86 100/70 89 92/69 92/50 **Science Communication** 83/81 na na 96/51 85/57 **Problem Solving** 97/93 na na 96/55 85/55 **Writing** Content na na 54/64 100/62 92/64 **Originality** na na 68/49 82/71 100/64 Style na na 61/42 54/46 100/43 Editing na na 82/47 87/75 100/50
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP) **% proficient or above**	**Fourth grade reading:** 100% proficient or above (49% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 73% proficient or above (24% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 93% proficient or above (51% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 75% proficient or above (36% district average) **Third grade reading** 97% proficient or above (66% district average)	**Reading** **Writing** **3rd grade** school 87% district 58% **4th grade** school 100% 77% district 51% 31% **7th grade** school 98% 95% district 52% 34%
Achievement Level Test Results (On a 250 scale) Level tests are based on the District 12 curriculum framework Results are shown for Stargate/District 12	Science Reading Math 3rd 210/195 213/195 217/196 4th 211/201 218/203 221/205 5th 204/217 230/210 230/212 6th 221/206 231/214 243/218 7th 222/209 236/218 249/222	Science Reading Math 3rd 207/187 208/188 na 4th 218/199 216/198 211/196 5th 223/206 222/206 215/202 6th 235/212 229/212 218/206 7th 244/218 234/216 222/209 8th 251/244 232/219 225/211	Science Reading Math 3rd 204/187 203/189 na 4th 221/199 219/199 212/197 5th 226/207 222/2067 215/203 6th 232/212 226/211 215/205 7th 240/220 233/211 220/209 8th 248/226 240/220 223/212
Parent Satisfaction % expressing satisfaction with school	92%	89%	89%
Attendance Rate	97%	96.6%	97.2%

PRAIRIE CREEKS CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring Districts: Bennett School District, Byers School District, Strasburg School District, and Deer Creek School District

Location:	Strasburg (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	not available
Enrollment:	8	**Percent Minority:**	12.5%
Grade Levels:	9 - 12		
Opening Date:	January 1998	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	18	**Percent Special Education:**	0%

MISSION: The mission of the Prairie Creeks Charter School is to provide a second chance alternative high school program to grades 9-12 expelled students, high-risk students, or students counseled because they could not get along in their regular school program.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Prairie Creeks Charter School is based on the PLATO Computer Based Learning System, the Internet and self-directed learning. As advocates for lifelong learning and success, we are committed to developing effective self-management and fostering positive learning attitudes.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of the Superintendents of the four sponsoring districts. The Board is responsible for determining the school policies. The site administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- 90% of students will rate their training as "good" or "excellent" on a four-point scale.
- 80% of students will demonstrate improvement of one point on a five-point scale in 70% of the competencies measured.
- 98% of students will rate their engagement with PLATO as "good" or "excellent" on a four-point scale.
- 80% of students will respond positively to having utilized 50% of PLATO resources.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Student Progress (PCCCS students must reach at least 80% mastery level)	not available	96.4% exceed an 87% mastery level
Percentage of students demonstrating improvement of at least one grade level during academic year	not available	100%
Graduation Rate	not available	90%
Attendance		75%

BOULDER PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Boulder Valley School District

Location: Boulder (suburban)
Enrollment: 34
Grade Levels: 9 - 12
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: 7

Student/Teacher Ratio: not reported
Percent Minority: 55.9%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 8.8%
Percent Special Education: 26.4%

MISSION: Boulder Preparatory High School's mission is to provide year-round college preparatory education for all enrolled Boulder Valley students. Boulder Preparatory High School targets students who have become "at risk" youth because they are disconnected from the traditional school system or have had a troubled childhood. Boulder Prep High School provides an educational program that not only teachers the classics in a classical way, but also teaches how to apply the lessons of the classics to modern day situations and issues. Every student has a talent or interest that if nourished and encouraged will result in excellence. Achieving excellent results gives hope and confidence. The student must then be taught to translate that success into a better understanding of other topics and ideas. Teachers are responsible for facilitating the process of translating success from one subject to another. Boulder Prep's mission is to provide each student with the opportunity to grow into respectful young adults who will have the knowledge, will and self-esteem to succeed in college and in life.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Courses are presented in seven-week blocks on a year-round schedule. Students receive at least eighty hours of instruction in each course. Students demonstrate their abilities to read and comprehend all course material, write effectively about assigned course work and apply the work learned in a substantive manner. In most classes, there are two instructors in order to provide more individualized assistance to students. Educational programming stresses the traditional core subjects in a small group setting. This setting allows instructors and students to approach subjects in a way that allows teachers and students to build upon the educational experience in a way that is meaningful to them. The course content and academic standards are the same as other high schools in the sponsoring district.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of two parents, two teachers, two community representatives, and one student. The Board is responsible for determining the school policies. The school administration is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Improved academic performance
- Improved attendance
- Graduation
- College acceptance
- College attendance
- Reduction of criminal recidivism

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Academic Performance	Students took the California Achievement Test at the beginning and end of the school year. The results showed small gains	Students took written assessments and the CTBS standardized test. Results were mixed from 14% to 40%
Attendance	90% attendance for students who remained for full five blocks	85% attendance for students who remained full five blocks.
Graduation	All 18 seniors have completed the program and graduated	All 18 seniors have completed the program and graduated
College Acceptance	All 18 seniors who graduated were accepted into at least one college	All 18 seniors who graduated were accepted into at least one college
College Attendance	Only three students are currently enrolled in college	Only three students are currently enrolled in college.
Reduction of criminal recidivism	No student committed no new criminal acts.	80% of students committed no new criminal acts
Advanced Placement Courses		School provided three AP classes. Six students took an AP class, Five students passed the AP examination

HORIZONS K-8 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Boulder Valley School District

Location:	Boulder (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	16.7
Enrollment:	307	**Percent Minority:**	7.5%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	4.2%
Waiting List:	150	**Percent Special Education:**	10.7%

MISSION: Shared dedication and commitment to educational excellence enables parents, staff and community members to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment at Horizons. Children and adults work together at Horizons to strength their school and maximize their individual potential. Horizons, as a member of William Glasser's Quality School Network, is committed to:

- Guiding students in grades K-8 to become self-directed learners and community contributors;
- Addressing the learning needs of the whole child in multi-age settings through challenging, developmentally appropriate curriculum;
- Identifying and enhancing the strengths of every student through active, personalized, authentic learning activities which honor individual student interests, choice and goals; and
- Maintaining high academic and behavior expectations for all students in a non-coercive, respectful and mutually caring learning environment.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Horizons program provides a rich and challenging curriculum which emphasizes mastery of literacy and numeracy skills, integrating basic skills and content with topics of interest and relevance to the students. Horizons emphasizes technology, Spanish language instruction, performing arts, service learning, outdoor education and student choices in the arts and sciences. Small classes, multi-age groups, school-wide curricular themes, individual learning goals, alternative assessments, family conferences, flexible staff roles, an emphasis on professional development, and extensive community participation characterize the school.

GOVERNANCE: The Horizons Board, comprised of six elected teachers and four elected parents, has final decision making authority. The lead teacher, with the assistance of the faculty and staff, is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions. All parents are invited to participate with all teachers and staff members in the governance of the school. The Horizons Council meets once a month to develop school policies and structures through a concordance model of decision making.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The school's attendance rate will exceed 95% each year.
- 98% of the students enrolled in the school will continue in the program from year to year.
- The school's suspension rate will be less than 1% a year, and there will be no cases of smoking, drug possession/use and possession of weapons and no student expulsions.
- The Horizons community will maintain high levels of parent and teacher understanding and satisfaction with the school and the BVSD's School Snapshot Survey will indicate parent satisfaction levels of at least 95% a year and teacher satisfaction of at least 98%.
- Horizons students will demonstrate high levels of academic performance on the CTBS, with median percentiles at all grade levels of at least 75%.
- Horizons student will demonstrate high levels of academic performance on CSAP measures for grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8, with 90% - 100% of students demonstrating proficiency on grade level measures in reading, writing, math and science.
- Horizons middle school students will continue to successfully transition from eighth grade to high school by satisfactorily completing their grade level requirements each year.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99

Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) (Scores shown are median percentiles)	**Reading Lang Arts Math** Grade 3 83 71 83 Grade 4 na na 91 Grade 5 87 74 87 Grade 6 88 86 88 Grade 7 85 79 81 Grade 8 90 94 94	**Reading Lang Arts Math** Grade 3 92 78 87 Grade 4 na 86 90 Grade 5 91 89 92 Grade 6 88 76 80 Grade 7 85 79 81 Grade 8 85 90 84
Colorado Student Achievement Program (CSAP)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 95% district 65% **4th grade** school 92% 71% district 70% 48%	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 100% district 79% **4th grade** school 87% 54% district 76% 46% **7th grade** school 94% 83% district 71% 61%
Attendance	96.1%	95.6%
Re-enrollment Rate	Elementary - 99% Middle School - 98%	Elementary - 99% Middle School - 99%
Parent Satisfaction/ Teacher Satisfaction (% satisfied on Boulder Valley School District's School Snapshot Survey)	**Parents Teachers** Learning Environment 95% 100% Shared Decision Making 94% 100% Communication 93% 98% Leadership 94% 100% Student Learning 90% 100%	**Parents Teachers** Learning Environment 97% 100% Shared Decision Making 89% 100% Communication 93% 100% Leadership 89% 100% Student Learning 93% 100%
Suspension Rate/ Expulsion Rate	1.4% 0%	.3% 0%

SUMMIT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Boulder Valley School District

Location:	Boulder (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	15.9
Enrollment:	254	**Percent Minority:**	10.2%
Grade Levels:	6-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	3.9%
Waiting List:	69	**Percent Special Education:**	2.4%

MISSION:

- To provide a rigorous, academic curriculum that promotes high levels of student effort and academic achievement.
- To foster high self-esteem through stimulating intellectual challenge and meaningful academic accomplishment.
- To inspire in students a lifelong love of learning and a desire for self-development.
- To create a community of peers who value scholarship, academic achievement and creativity.
- To serve as an excellent preparation for students intending to study in the International Baccalaureate program and other college-preparatory high school program.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Summit offers challenging, ability-grouped middle school courses in which students are placed through an assessment of mastery of each subject area and ability, rather than on the basis of age or grade level. Five required core courses include English, science, math, social studies and foreign language.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is composed of seven voting members, elected by the parents of the entire student body as well as staff. The Principal and the Business Manager serve in a non-voting capacity. The Board sets policy for the school and the Principal is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS: (from charter and annual school improvement plans)

- To expand educational choices within Boulder Valley School District.
- To provide the option of advanced classes for any student on a self-selecting basis.
- To group students according to subject mastery rather than grade classification or age.
- To challenge every student in every course.
- To elicit academic achievement commensurate with each student's ability.
- To maintain an unwavering commitment to the mastery of educational fundamentals (content) and the development of critical thinking skills (process).
- To enhance each student's social and emotional development and to foster positive relationships among peers.
- To recognize that its customers are students, parents, and the community, and to be responsive and accountable to their concerns.
- To strive to reflect the diverse population of the Boulder Valley School District.
- To meet or exceed District and State curriculum, content and performance standards.
- To monitor the program and evaluate it regularly.
- To ensure safety, civility and an optimum leaning environment.
- The school will use the CTBS (Terra Nova) assessment to check for more than one year of growth in academic achievement for all students in every school year in the core areas and to address weaknesses noted in the previous year's test results.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) National percentile rank		**Reading Lang. Math** 6th 92.0 88.5 86.6 7th 92.8 87.2 85.0 8th 94.0 90.8 90.6 **Sci Soc St Spell** 6th 88.7 87.0 80.2 7th 88.4 90.5 73.3 8th 92.6 89.0 72.8	**Reading Lang. Math** 6th 85.7 88.2 81.8 7th 87.8 87.7 92.2 8th 90.4 91.3 88.5 **Sci Soc St Spell** 6th 87.0 86.0 69.4 7th 89.5 87.8 67.4 8th 91.8 88.8 88.9
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS - Terra Nova) National percentile rank Longitudinal comparison of students as they advance from one grade level to the next		**6th / 7th 7th / 8th** **1997/ 1998 1997/1998** Reading: 90.8 / 92.8 94.0 / 94.0 Language: 87.3 / 87.2 86.6 /90.8 Math 80.5 / 85.0 88.2 / 90.6 Science: 91.1 / 88.4 88.3 / 92.6 Social Studies: 86.6 / 90.5 92.4 / 89.0 Spelling: 83.3 / 73.3 78.8 / 72.8	**8th grade (1999)** Reading: 90.4 Language: 91.3 Math 88.5 Science 91.8 Social Studies 88.8 Spelling: 88.9
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 96% proficient or above (71% district average) **7th grade writing:** 94% proficient or above (61%) district average
Attendance Rate	94.6%	95.7%	94.96%
Parent Involvement	18,000+ hours volunteered by parents/families	15,000+ hours volunteered by parents/families	17,000 hours volunteered by parents/families
Retention Rate Percentage of students who re-enroll the following school year	97%	98%	97%

MOUNTAIN VIEW CORE KNOWLEGE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Canon City County School District Re-1

Location:	Canon City (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	24.1
Enrollment:	177	**Percent Minority:**	6.8%
Grade Levels:	K-6		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	10.2%
Waiting List:	412	**Percent Special Education:**	7.3%

MISSION: The mission of Mountain View Core Knowledge Charter School is to stimulate wonder and curiosity, engage the mind, and promote vision and understanding of the world to all students. Goals include giving students the opportunity to maximize potential by exposure to a common foundation of an organized body of knowledge sequentially presented by grade level. Character values including integrity, respect, responsibility and compassion will be strongly encouraged. The school achieves these goals through emphasis on a structured educational philosophy, strong encouragement of parental involvement, and commitment to treating each child as a unique individual.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The academic program is driven by the *Core Knowledge Sequence* curriculum, edited by Dr. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., which comprises at least 50% of the instructional time. The Core Knowledge curriculum is supplemented for all grade levels with the *Modern Curriculum Press* phonics and spelling program, the *Open Court* Reading program, the *Saxon Mathematics* program, Spanish, music, art, physical education and library. The kindergarten program is full-day.

GOVERNANCE: The school's governing board is comprised of five parents. The school administrator serves as a non-voting member of the board. The board sets policy for the school. The principal makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The school will implement the Core Knowledge Sequence curriculum.
- The school will attain an attendance rate of 96% or greater, to meet or exceed the average for public schools in the district.
- Volunteer involvement in the school will equal at least 100% of full-time staffing hours.
- Student performance will meet or exceed Colorado state performance standards in all subjects, for all grade levels.
- The school will address the educational needs of each student to promote individual progress and academic success.
- The school will maintain a stable enrollment.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - National percentile rank; 50% is the national average Tests were administered in the spring	**Core score:** K 87 1st 77 2nd 67 3rd 73 4th 61	**Core score:** K 92 1st 88 2nd 74 3rd 64 4th 66 5th 52	**Core score:** K 92 1st 88 2nd 74 3rd 64 4th 66 5th 52
Colorado Student Achievement Test **(% proficient or above)**	**Fourth grade reading:** 60% proficient or above (60% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 35% proficient or above (27% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 72% prof. or above (53% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 60% prof. or above (28% district average) **Third grade reading:** 92% prof. or above (69% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 76% prof. or above (58% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 52% prof. or above (28% district average) **Third grade reading:** 72% prof. or above (71% district average)
Achievement Level Test for Canon City School District Median Percentile Rank Scores show Mountain View and (district) performance	**Lang. Math Reading** 3rd grade 77 77 63 4th grade 66 55 85	**Lang. Math Reading** 3rd grade 79 (55) 62(50) 63(44) 4th grade 72(44) 68(43) 67(41) 5th grade 61(51) 55(47) 64(44)	**Lang. Math Reading** 3rd grade 78 (58) 65(47) 66(44) 4th grade 75(46) 70(46) 67(44) 5th grade 72(43) 75(42) 72(39) 6th grade 67(47) 66(52) 70(46)
Attendance Rate	95.8%	96%	98%
Retention Rate	89%	95%	91%
Parent Satisfaction Percentage of parents who are satisfied or very satisfied with the school		100%	98%

CHERRY CREEK ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Cherry Creek School District

Location:	Englewood (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	17.4
Enrollment:	449	**Percent Minority:**	5.6%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	1,250	**Percent Special Education:**	7.3%

MISSION: Motivated children and responsible parents working together with dedicated teachers for excellent education.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: This school employs a Core Knowledge curriculum to focus on solid, fundamental mastery of the basics. The program also emphasizes student character, community involvement and parent responsibility.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board (comprised of nine parents) makes policy for the school. The director is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The improvement goal for all students is 10% per year for each of the first three years of the charter. The ultimate goal is an attainment level of 85% for 85% of students, averaged over all subject areas.
- Student reading, math and science scores will increase by at least 5% per year from established baseline scores.
- Perfect attendance is the goal for every student.
- The school will not be satisfied with less than 100% retention of those students whose parents are dedicated to a serious education of their children.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills National percentile rank (50% is the national average) Test is administered in spring of the academic year	**Reading Lang. Math** 1st 87 91 97 2nd 72 79 81 3rd 68 81 74 4th 73 73 69 5th 64 63 63 6th 76 72 72 7th 70 62 66	**Reading Lang. Math** K 94 95 98 1st 87 88 89 2nd 88 90 91 3rd 67 69 69 4th 78 79 79 5th 71 66 66 6th 78 71 64 7th 70 62 78 8th 79 80 77	**Reading Lang. Math** K 96 98 99 1st 84 80 79 2nd 92 93 94 3rd 76 82 81 4th 79 79 79 5th 70 68 75 6th 73 72 73 7th 70 65 64 8th 73 75 75
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 88% proficient or above (70% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 48% proficient or above (45% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 89% prof. or above (72% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 81% prof. or above (53% district average) **Third grade reading:** 80% prof. or above (75% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 94% district 77 % **4th grade** school 87% 73% district 72% 49% **7th grade** school 79% 69% district 68% 54%
Parent Satisfaction	98% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the school	92% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the school	97% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the school
Parent Involvement	12,000 + hours volunteered 95% of parents volunteer	12,000+ hours	12,000+ hours
Attendance Rate	95.7%	98%	97%

CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN CHARTER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Cheyenne Mountain District 12

Location:	Colorado Springs (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	20.9
Enrollment:	319	**Percent Minority:**	10.3%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	11.0%
Waiting List:	140	**Percent Special Education:**	3.1%

MISSION: The mission of Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy is to help guide students in development of their character and academic potential through academically rigorous, content-rich educational programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Academy's educational program and approach to curriculum emphasizes the "Core Knowledge Sequence" supplemented with "Direct Instruction" – carefully crafted research-based curriculum materials that teach concepts incrementally and sequentially. The school believes that education cannot be taught in a moral vacuum; education reform depends on putting character first.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors, comprised of four parents and one community member, sets policy for the school. The Administrator makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Achieve an attendance rate of 95%.
- Achieve an average median attainment of 80% (as measured by standardized tests) in all subjects for all grade levels.
- 90% of students will have the skills/competencies to advance to the next grade (for 1996-97 school year). The goal for the 1997-98 school year is 95%.
- 100% of all classes will perform at or above grade level.
- 80% of at-risk students will narrow the gap between their current grade level and performance level.
- 60% of students performing above grade level will increase the gap between current grade level and their performance level.
- Stakeholders will volunteer 4,000 hours per year.
- 90% of parents will be satisfied with the school's total educational program.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Stanford Achievement Test Grade level equivalent/ National percentile rank Battery Totals	**Spring 1997** K 1.6 / 92 1st 2.5 / 78 2nd 4.3 / 86 3rd 4.5 / 65 4th 7.5 / 85 5th 7.4 / 69 6th 9.4 / 85 7th 11.0 / 85 8th 12+ / 82 Average percentile ranking of all students: 81	**Spring 1998** K 1.5 / 87 1st 2.7 / 89 2nd 4.4 / 81 3rd 5.5 / 74 4th 6.7 / 77 5th 8.8 / 83 6th 9.9 / 80 7th 12+ / 90 8th 12+ / 87 Average percentile ranking of all students: 81	**Spring 1998** K 1.5 / 91 1st 2.4 / 79 2nd 3.7 / 84 3rd 4.7 / 74 4th 6.2 / 77 5th 7.8 / 79 6th 10.3 / 86 7th 12.1 / 86 8th 13.3 / 90 Average percentile ranking of all students: 82
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 88% proficient or above (86% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 54% proficient or above (59% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 79% proficient or above (77% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 64% proficient or above (56% district average) **Third grade reading:** 92% proficient or above (88% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 91% district 90 % **4th grade** school 93% 64% district 84% 59% **7th grade** school 100% 96% district 81% 67%
Percentage of Students with skills/competencies to advance to the next grade level (Measured by teacher observation, classroom evaluations, and Stanford achievement tests)	96%	96%	99%
Re-enrollment Rate	97%	89%	87%
Parent Satisfaction % of parents satisfied with educational program	98.4%	98%	92%
Attendance Rate	94%	94.5	95.4%

CIVA CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Colorado Springs District 11

Location:	Colorado Springs (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	28
Enrollment:	107	**Percent Minority:**	21.5%
Grade Levels:	9-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	29.9%
Waiting List:	did not report	**Percent Special Education:**	7.5%

MISSION: Did not report

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Did not report

GOVERNANCE: Did not report

PERFORMANCE GOALS: Did not report

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Did not report		
Did not report		
Did not report		

COMMUNITY PREP CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Colorado Springs District 11

Location: Colorado Springs (urban)
Enrollment: 126
Grade Levels: 9-12
Opening Date: Fall 1996
Waiting List: 40

Student/Teacher Ratio: 38.1
Percent Minority: 40.5%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 23.0%
Percent Special Education: 11.0%

MISSION: To provide a quality education in an environment that encourages innovative modes of teaching and learning in order to empower each individual student to develop academically, socially, and physically as a global citizen of the 21st century.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: This school serves high-risk potential dropouts and dropouts through a program jointly operated by District 11 and the City of Colorado Springs. CPS uses a modified Paideia instructional approach, based on student-centered learning. The program teaches life-long learning skills, successful employment and responsible citizenship. Didactic instruction is combined with coaching sessions and Socratic seminars. The school uses community-based education providers and the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) – an individualized, self-paced, competency based, open-entry/exit learning approach that integrates varied instructional materials and technologies. Students do not progress to a higher level of CCP until they demonstrate 80% mastery of their current level. Each student has an Individual Service Strategy that addresses social and educational goals.

GOVERNANCE: The school is managed by the Community Prep School Unit, City of Colorado Springs. An advisory school-based accountability committee develops the annual school improvement plan. The principal makes day to day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Each student will earn an average of 7 credits.
- The school's attendance rate will increase by 10% (for 1997-98).
- The school will meet all exit outcome standards of District 11 and the State of Colorado.
- The school will reduce the 1995-96 actual dropout rate of 3.3%.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Credits Granted to Students Enrolled Note: All credits require 80% mastery of material	887 credits granted.	1,010 credit granted	948 credits granted
Attendance	77.5%	87%	not available
Retention Rate (students must earn 80% to move on)		81% - 18 students graduated and 80 students returned out of 122 total.	not available
Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) 10th grade National Percentile Rank	Scores shown are for fall 1996/spring 1997 Reading: 43/32 *District 11 Averages: 55/59* Writing: 36/34 *District 11 Averages: 51/57* Math: 31/35 *District 11 Averages: 56/52*	Scores shown are for fall 1997 for Community Prep/ District 11 Reading: 32 / 59 Language: 34 / 57 Math: 35 / 52	Scores shown are for fall 1998 for Community Prep Reading: 42 Language: 35 Math: 33

GLOBE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Colorado Springs District 11

Location:	Colorado Springs (urban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	12.1
Enrollment:	140	**Percent Minority:**	23.6%
Grade Levels:	K-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	25.7%
Waiting List:	not reported	**Percent Special Education:**	9.3%

MISSION: The GLOBE Charter School of Colorado Springs will provide educational environments, academic curricula, teaching methods, and individualized programs, goals and assessments for all its students, whose general aims will be to rejuvenate the educational process for all participants, reconnect it in a meaningful and dynamic way with the individual, the community, and the world it is meant to serve, and make a positive contribution to the local, national and global educational debate, by:

1. **Establishing a creative partnership** of parents, educators, students, community members, academics, and professionals to revitalize the educational process.
2. **Addressing the needs of special student populations** through highly individualized, innovative, integrated and consistent programs.
3. **Piloting a core curriculum that is coherent, continuous and relevant**, providing all students a sense of connectedness with, and opportunities to participate meaningfully in, the learning process and the life of their school, their community, and the world in which they live.
4. **Restoring choice and responsibility** to parents, teachers, and students, with regard to the schooling and education process as a whole – its contents, aims, procedures, structure, environment, organization, ideas, vision, purpose.
5. **Providing an innovative experimental model** through curriculum materials and projects, educational environments and programs, classroom presentations, and teacher training workshops, as a contribution to the general project of education reform in Colorado.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school uses a global, issues-oriented curriculum, featuring interdisciplinary thematic units, community service projects, portfolio assessment, and dynamic partnerships between students, faculty, and scholars/professionals in various disciplines.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors (comprised of five parents, one staff member, one accountability committee member and two community representatives) makes policy decisions for the school. The CEO and faculty make day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- GLOBE students will perform at or near district and national averages in all basic academic skills areas as measured by standardized tests.
- Improve math achievement, as measured by standardized tests, for all grades.
- Systematically link the curriculum, daily and weekly lesson plans, performance assessments, portfolio assessments and individualized student goals.
- Increase individualization of curriculum and experiential learning opportunities.
- Cultivate parent volunteer participation.
- Develop, test and implement assessments, including portfolios, that more directly influence the teaching and learning process.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
District Achievement Levels Test (DALT)	**Reading Math Language** 3rd 195/192 180/200 188/208 4th 194/209 184/197 198/204 5th 209/201 204/200 208/197 6th 209/209 202/206 211/208 7th 210/223 209/221 203/214 8th 207/233 214/235 209/216 Scores shown are for **GLOBE STUDENTS** **Fall 1996/Spring 1997**	**Reading Math Lang.** 3rd 205 197 202 (191) (196) (199) 4th 203 210 210 (205) (207) (208) 5th 204 204 204 (211) (216) (213) 6th 208 206 205 (215) (220) (217) 7th 206 207 203 (218) (226) (219) 8th 222 222 219 (223) (232) (224) Scores shown are for Spring 1998. District averages are shown in parentheses ( ).	Did not report
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National percentile rank 50% is national average	8th 10th **Reading** 54.2/54 67.3/63 **Lang.** 43.9/44 55.8/57 **Math** 46.3/47 49.5/57 **Core** 46.6/47 55.8/57 Scores shown are Average score of GLOBE students/district average	5th 7th **Reading** 46 29 **Lang.** 20 24 **Math** 12 24 **Core** 23 30 The test was administered 2/98.	Did not report
Attendance Rate	95.5%	93%	90%
Parent Involvement	1,600 hours volunteered	2,000 hours volunteered	Did not report
Portfolios	By year end, all students had portfolios that included evaluation rubrics for each subject, student work from throughout the year, standardized test scores and teacher evaluations.	By year end, all students had portfolios that included evaluation rubrics for each subject, student work from throughout the year, standardized test scores and teacher evaluations.	Did not report

ROOSEVELT-EDISON CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Colorado Springs District 11

Location:	Colorado Springs (urban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	13.7
Enrollment:	985	**Percent Minority:**	48.9%
Grade Levels:	K-7		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	64.6%
Waiting List:	325	**Percent Special Education:**	9.7%

MISSION: The mission of the Colorado Springs-Edison Charter School is to prepare a diverse cross section of Colorado Springs children for success as students, workers and citizens by providing them with a world class education at prevailing school costs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Roosevelt-Edison Charter School is a partnership between the Edison Project and Colorado Springs District 11. Partnership schools are required to blend the research-proven elements of Edison's school design with the vision, creativity and energy of education professionals in local communities. The school design includes the organization of students into multi-age "houses", an innovative schedule, team teaching, an extended school day and year, a rich and challenging curriculum (*Success for All* in Reading, *Everyday Math, Science Place, Heartwood: An Ethics Curriculum for Children*), an extensive technology program and partnerships with parents and community. Instructional strategies include cooperative learning, projects and direct instruction. The Edison Project has developed its own assessment system to support its program.

GOVERNANCE: The national Edison Project sets policy related to school design and major program parameters for Roosevelt- Edison. A school-based advisory group, comprised of parents and representatives from the community, helps set budget priorities and implement local programs related to public relations, student achievement, fund raising and school events.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Increase reading test scores by 5% from pre-test to post-test on an annual basis, as measured by Gates McGinty in grades 3-5 and Success for All in grades K-2.
- Increase math test scores by 5% from pre-test to post-test on an annual basis, as measured by DALT in grades 3-5 and teacher assessments in grades K-2.
- Increase the percentage of students reading at the proficient level by 4% per year.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
District Achievement Level Tests (DALT) Data is reported in RIT scores comparing growth from fall to spring. District results are shown in parentheses ( ).	**Reading Math Language** **3rd grade** 184/189 178/181 184/190 (181/199) (184/197) (191/201) 4th grade 195/198 192/197 194/201 (199/205) 198/208) (201/208) 5th grade 201/205 200/204 202/207 (207/211) (207/217) (209/214)	**Reading Math Language** **3rd grade** 179/190 176/186 179/190 (186/199) (184/201) (189/201) 4th grade 191/199 188/195 192/199 (199/206) (198/207) (201/208) 5th grade 202/208 202/207 205/210 (206/211) (207/216) (209/214)	**Reading Math Language** **3rd grade** 179/192 178/188 181/193 (189/199) (184/197) (190/201) 4th grade 190/198 190/1958 192/200 (199/205) (197/207) (201/207) 5th grade 202/208 202/207 205/210 (206/211) (206/216) (209/214)
Colorado Student Achievement Test	**Fourth grade reading:** 43% proficient or above (58% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 19% proficient or above (30% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 30% proficient or above (59% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 19% proficient or above (36% district average) **Third grade reading:** 45% proficient or above (64% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 49% district 66% **4th grade** school 37% 18% district 58% 34% **7th grade** school 21% 12% district 52% 36%
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - National percentile rank. National average is 50% Fifth grade scores are shown both for Roosevelt-Edison/District 11.	**Reading Lang** **3rd grade** 27 22 **4th grade** 41 29 **5th grade** 43/56 30/49 **Math Core** **3rd grade** 20 22 **4th grade** 23 31 **5th grade** 21/49 29/51	**Reading Lang** **3rd grade** 28 25 **4th grade** 43 36 **5th grade** 44/56 36/51 **Math Core** **3rd grade** 27 24 **4th grade** 23 34 **5th grade** 29/51 35/52	**Reading Lang** **3rd grade** 36 31 **4th grade** 42 44 **5th grade** 35/56 41/51 **Math Core** **3rd grade** 29 38 **4th grade** 41 29 **5th grade** 32/51 35/52
Attendance Rate		94.9%	92.9%
Parent Satisfaction (Measured on a 10-point scale)	8.3	7.8	8.7

PIONEER CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Denver Public Schools

Location: Denver (urban)
Enrollment: 311
Grade Levels: PreK - 5
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: not reported

Student/Teacher Ratio: 31
Percent Minority: 97.4%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 87.5%
Percent Special Education: 5.8%

MISSION: Not reported

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Not reported

GOVERNANCE: Not reported

PERFORMANCE GOALS: Not reported

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Third grade reading:** 23% proficient or above (45% district average) **Fourth grade reading:** 21% proficient or above (32% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 9% proficient or above (17% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 9% proficient or above (43% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 8% proficient or above (31% district average) **Third grade reading:** 0% proficient or above (16% district average)
Not reported		
Not reported		

P. S. 1

Sponsoring District: Denver Public Schools

Location:	Denver (urban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	12.5
Enrollment:	233	**Percent Minority:**	45.9%
Grade Levels:	Over age 10	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	29.6%
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Special Education:**	7.8%
Waiting List:	School expanded in 1998-99 to accommodate all interested students		

MISSION: P.S. 1's mission is to enrich life in the urban core of Denver – to add to its attractiveness, increase its economic viability, enliven its cultural life and bring out its hospitality. P.S. 1 will make its contributions to this mission by enabling young people to work together as a learning community on challenging projects that make a difference in the quality of city life and, in the process, draw students toward higher and higher standards of character, conduct, work, academic achievement and community service.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: P.S. 1's program comes from weaving together: student interests, strengths and weaknesses (as developed through Personal Learning Plans); opportunities for learning in the city; staff and volunteer expertise; Colorado Content Standards and other national standards; and P.S. 1 standards relating to character, conduct, work, academic achievement and community service.

GOVERNANCE: The Urban Learning Community's Board of Directors, comprised of three parents, two administrators and six community members, sets the vision and direction for the school. The Principal is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions and delegates much decision-making to staff and community members.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- All students must demonstrate that they have developed and can articulate high standards of character, conduct, work, academic achievement and community service.
- All students must demonstrate that they have acquired "Habits of the Mind," which include critical and creative thinking, anticipatory thinking, reflectiveness and capacities to analyze, synthesize, interpret and evaluate information in many symbol systems.
- 75% of all students who have completed two years of learning at P.S. 1 will be reading at grade level, as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Reading Test.
- At the end of the 1996-97 school year and each year thereafter, 75% of P.S. 1 students will show reading improvement relative to grade or age level standards, as measured by the Degree of Reading Power (DRP) tests.
- At the end of the 1996-97 school year and each year thereafter, 75% of P.S. 1 students will show reading and writing improvement, as measured by alternative assessments developed by P.S. 1 educators.
- 75% of P.S. 1 students will show improvement relative to grade level standards in writing as demonstrated on a jointly agreed writing sample.
- All P.S. 1 students must demonstrate that they have achieved state model content standards through portfolios, knowledge bases, staff judgments, appropriate standardized tests, presentations and performances with school-developed scoring rubrics for each grade or groups of grades that are judged to be valid, reliable, and that provide comparable results to state-developed assessments.
- Given a career/academic plan, all students will demonstrate mastery of appropriate academic and work-place competence prior to graduation.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	79% of students who have completed two years at P.S. 1 are reading at or above grade level. 66% of students who have completed at least one year at P.S. 1 are reading at or above grade level. Overall, P.S. 1 averages are among the highest in the district. Mean scores for students in 5th, 7th and 8th grades rose between fall 1996 and spring 1997. Mean score for students in the 6th and 9th grades stayed the same.	80% of students who have completed two years at P.S. 1 are reading at or above grade level. Mathematics scores from Spring 1997 to Spring 1998 (entire school) improved 1.26 grade level equivalent. Every grade (except for 6th grade) improved at least one grade level equivalent. Overall, P.S. 1 averages are among the highest in the district. All P.S. 1 grade levels improved more than one grade level equivalent during the 1997-98 school year.	79% of students who have completed two years at P.S. 1 are reading at or above grade level. National Percentile Rank 50 is the national average **Reading Math** 6th grade 61 43 7th grade 57 44 8th grade 56 52 9th grade 54 43 10th grade 57 56 11th grade 79 69 12th grade 56 na
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP) This test is normed in terms of ages not grades. It provides information about the level of text complexity that the student can comprehend.	**5th** 42% **6th** 53% **7th** 76% **8th** 56% **9th** 60% **10th** 58% **11th** 41% National Percentile Rank	86% of students improved on the DRP test from November 1997 to November 1998	Among students who have been at P.S. 1 two or more years: 8th graders are scoring at grade level 10.3 9th graders are scoring at grade level 10.5 10th graders are scoring at a 12th grade level 11th graders are scoring at grade level 13.2
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 35 % proficient or above (31 % district average) **7th grade writing:** 21 % proficient or above (19 % district average)
Parent Satisfaction Percent who agree or strongly agree that learning opportunities meet the needs of students.	95%	78%	not reported
Attendance Rate	95%	95%	not reported
Drop Out Rate			3%

ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location:	Castle Rock (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	14.3
Enrollment:	348	**Percent Minority:**	8.3%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1993	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	6.0%
Waiting List:	300	**Percent Special Education:**	10.1%

MISSION: Academy Charter School provides a challenging academic program based on the Core Knowledge Curriculum that promotes Academic Excellence, Character Development and Educational Enthusiasm for its students.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Academy Charter School uses an intensive, hands-on developmental approach to teach the Core Knowledge curriculum. Teachers strive to integrate curriculum/instruction across disciplines while developing students' problem solving and critical thinking skills. Technology and organizational skills are integrated into the curriculum. Each student has an individual learning plan.

GOVERNANCE: A Governing Board (comprised of seven parents) sets policy for the school. The dean of the school is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Each student will show a minimum of one year's growth in all academic areas (or as reasonable for students with exceptional needs).
- Meet or exceed the 65 percentile on composite scores for grades 2-8.
- Attendance rate will attain or exceed 95%.
- 75% of parents will volunteer at least 20 hours per year.
- To meet or exceed the 75 percentile for reading skills according to MEAP.
- Math proficiency scores for grades 4 and 7 will increase to 80% as measured by Terra Nova.
- Reading proficiency scores for grades 4 and 7 will increase to 80% as measured by Terra Nova.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank	**Reading Lang. Math** 3rd 62 53 70 6th 72 67 78 8th 76 68 71 These scores met or exceeded the average district scores.	A comparison of Terra Nova scores for the same students from the 1996-97 to the 1997-98 school year showed significant improvements for students who scored low in 1996-97. Scores for students who scored high in 1996-97 were mixed.	**Reading Math** 4th 81 84 7th 82 84
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 72% proficient or above (75% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 28% proficient or above (46% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 66% proficient or above (70% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 49% proficient or above (47% district average) **Third grade reading:** 89% proficient or above (80% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 86% district 81 % **4th grade** school 76% 51% district 74% 49% **7th grade** school 65% 58% district 76% 60%
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) % scoring at proficient level	*Grade 4 Grade 7* *Reading* Story 75 77 Info 34 51 *Math* Satis. 72 61 Medium 16 25 Low 13 14 These scores met or exceeded the average district scores.	*Grade 4 Grade 7* *Reading* Story 88 71 Info 67 67 *Math* Satis. 65 71 Medium 24 19 Low 12 10 These scores met or exceeded the average district scores.	Not administered
Parent Involvement	8,500 volunteer hours Approximately 80% of parents volunteered	9,000 volunteer hours Approximately 81% of parents/families volunteered	11,300 volunteer hours
Attendance Rate	96%	Not reported	96%

COLORADO VISIONARY ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location: Parker (suburban)
Enrollment: 275
Grade Levels: K-8
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Student/Teacher Ratio: 15.9
Percent Minority: 7.6%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 0%
Percent Special Education: 4.4%
Waiting List: 8 for K through 8 for 1999-2000 school year, 166 for future kindergarten

MISSION: We will deliver a balanced educational program grounded in high academic standards that blends traditional skills with exploration and application and promotes a positive school, family and community partnership.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school provides a program for each of its students that builds a solid academic foundation with mastery of basic skills. High academic and personal standards apply to all students and are clearly defined for students. Personal Education Contracts are developed for all students with their participation. Teachers use the Paideia teaching principles in the classroom. All new CVA teachers receive Paideia training prior to the beginning of the school year and there is an inservice workshop for all returning teachers.

CVA has adopted, designed, developed and implemented curricula that meets or exceeds the State and Douglas County School District standards. CVA uses Core Knowledge curricula and materials in Social Science and Language Arts. Other programs utilized are: Open Court (K-12); Read-Write Connection (through Douglas County School District); Six Traits of Writing Evaluation; Junior Great Books Reading Program. Body of Evidence portfolios are maintained for each student (these portfolios progress with the students as they move from grade to grade). The Body of Evidence portfolios keep evidence of students' progress toward meeting state standards. Science is taught through a hands-on program. All students keep math journals to promote problem solving. A technology instructor assists teachers with integrating the use of software in all educational programs.

GOVERNANCE: The Executive Council is comprised of seven parents, one teacher and the director. The Executive Council is responsible for determining the school policies. The director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Will provide a program for each of its students that builds a solid foundation with mastery of basic skills.
- Will provide a program for each of its students with a strong emphasis in math, science and technology.
- Will provide academically low-achieving students with appropriate learning opportunities and the support they need to succeed.
- Will implement programs and strategies to assist students in developing a sense of ownership in their education and school.
- Will establish partnerships between students, parents and teachers.
- Will create an environment where students receive the individual attention they need to succeed.
- Will regularly assess the progress of students and will use the results of these assessments to improve programs.
- Will maintain a high level of parent and student satisfaction with the school and will regularly survey these populations to obtain accurate data.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank Scores shown are for Colorado Visionary and for (Douglas County School District)	Grade 3 Reading 72 Language 77 Math 69	**Grade 3 6 8** Reading 61(68) 83(81) 93(75) Language 59(68) 84(80) 87(74) Math 68(76) 86(84) 85(83)
Iowa Test of Basic Skills National percentile rank		School Averages: Vocabulary: 73 Reading: 71 Language: 68 Math: 74
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)		**Fourth grade reading:** 61% proficient or above (74% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 38% proficient or above (49% district average) **Third grade reading:** 94% proficient or above (81% district average)
Basic Literacy Rate	not available	7.5% of students are on Individual Literacy Plans
Attendance Rate	94.5%	95.8%
Parent Involvement	15,226 hours volunteered by parents/families	1,677 hours volunteered by parents/families
Parent Satisfaction Surveys (On 5-point scale, 5 being very satisfied)		Overall satisfaction with curriculum 4.2 Overall satisfaction with teachers 4.2 Overall satisfaction with school to home communication 4.2
Re-enrollment Rate	not available	93%

CORE KNOWLEDGE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location:	Parker (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	19.3
Enrollment:	294	**Percent Minority:**	2.4%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	1.4%
Waiting List:	900	**Percent Special Education:**	3.7%

MISSION: We will strive to build a foundation of knowledge and skills that will enable our children to meet the challenges of a global society.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Core Knowledge Charter School features a content-driven curriculum based on the Core Knowledge Foundation's materials. Spanish language instruction is provided at every grade. The school emphasizes high standards for academic performance, small class size and parental involvement.

GOVERNANCE: The Operating Council, comprised of six parents, two staff members and the Director, sets policy for the school. The Director is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will perform at the 75th percentile or higher in all content areas as measured by CTBS.
- The school will maintain or exceed a 95% attendance rate.
- 90% of the students will work at or above grade level.
- 80% of parents will meet their obligation of 20+ hours of volunteer time.
- Reading assessment results for fourth and seventh graders will show 80% of students scoring at or above the satisfactory level for both fiction and non-fiction.
- Parents will re-enroll their children at a rate of 90%.
- 90% of existing 8th grade students who have had at least three years of consecutive Core Knowledge Charter School Spanish instruction will qualify for enrollment at the Spanish II level in high school.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 90% proficient or above (75% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 65% proficient or above (46% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 78% proficient or above (70% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 48% proficient or above (47% district average) **Third grade reading:** 87% proficient or above (80% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 90% district 81 % **4th grade** school 90% 68% district 74% 49% **7th grade** school 85% 70% district 76% 60%
Terra Nova National percentile rank	**Grade 3 6 8** Reading 83 85 65 Language 86 86 73 Math 80 90 61	**Grade 3 6 8** Reading 93 68 48 Language 95 78 55 Math 89 77 41	**Grade 3 6 8** Reading 78 79 90 Language 83 75 76 Math 82 73 28
Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)	***Grade 4 Grade 7*** ***Reading*** Story 95 100 Info 75 50 ***Math*** Satis. 90 83 Medium 10 11 Low - 5	***Grade 4 Grade 7*** ***Reading*** Story 89 83 Info 76 77 ***Math*** Satis. 70 75 Medium 24 17 Low 5 8	Not available
Parental Involvement	7,760 hours volunteered	8,100 hours volunteered	8,411 hours volunteered
8th grade students who have completed at least three consecutive years of Spanish instruction at CKCS and **who qualify for enrollment in Spanish II in high school**	50% of the graduating class who took the entrance test scores at the Spanish II level.	81% of the graduating class who took the entrance test scores at the Spanish II level.	100% of the graduating class who took the entrance test scores at the Spanish II level.
Parent Satisfaction % that stated they are satisfied with school's academic standards	78% are "pleased" with the school's academic standards.	81% are "pleased" with the school's academic standards.	92% are "pleased" with the school's academic standards.
Attendance Rate	95%	96%	96%

DSC MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location:	Littleton (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	24.5
Enrollment:	207	**Percent Minority:**	10.6%
Grade Levels:	preK - 6th		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	150	**Percent Special Education:**	2.4%

MISSION: The mission of the Montessori Charter School is to provide students with an opportunity to acquire an education based on an authentic and accredited curriculum founded on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The basic tenet of the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to maximize their physical and intellectual potential, students must develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline in an ordered environment. The world of the child is full of sights and sounds which at first appear chaotic; from this chaos, children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among the impressions that have assailed their senses, and slowly gain mastery of themselves and their environment. Dr. Montessori developed what she called the "prepared environment" which already possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own rate according to their own capacities, in a non-competitive atmosphere. Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher/facilitator prepares the environment, directs the activity, and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work itself. If Montessori children are free to learn, it is because they have acquired an inner discipline from their exposure both to physical and mental order. Patterns of concentration, perseverance and thoroughness established in early childhood produce a competent learner later in life

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of five parents, two community representatives, and the Head of School, serving in an ex-officio capacity. The Board of Directors is responsible for determining the school policies. The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Meet or exceed Douglas County School District's published standards in Language Arts, History, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Civics, Economics, Music and Art.
- Meet or exceed an attendance rate of 95%.
- Strive for a consistently high re-enrollment rate of the eligible student population.
- Maintain a 90% graduation rate to high school.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank Scores shown are for DSC Montessori and for (Douglas County School District)		**Grade 3 6** Reading 67(68) 63(81) Language 60(68) 64(80) Math 71(76) 57(84)
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)		**Third grade reading:** 81% proficient or above (81% district average) Results for fourth grade are not reported because fewer than 16 student took the test
Attendance Rate		95%
Re-enrollment Rate		

PLATTE RIVER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location:	Highlands Ranch (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	26.2
Enrollment:	359	**Percent Minority:**	10.6%
Grade Levels:	K-7		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	700	**Percent Special Education:**	4.2%

MISSION: The mission of Platte River Academy is to provide a content-rich academically rigorous education with a well-defined, sequential curriculum in a safe, orderly and caring environment.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Platte River Academy features the Core Knowledge Curriculum plus art, music. Other features of the school include

- Traditional school calendar.
- Class size limited to 24 students with two classes per grade level and instructional aides.
- Ability grouping in reading and math.
- Spanish for grades K-8.
- Codes of expectations for academics, behavior and dress.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of six parents, one community representative, and the dean. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The dean is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will improve reading comprehension 3% each year, as measured by the Terra Nova, and exceed the district average each year.
- Student will exceed the district average in math on the Terra Nova assessments each year. Math scores will increase 5% each year.
- Students will increase language proficiency by 3% on the Terra Nova assessments each year.
- 100% of parents will be involved in the school.
- Meet or exceed CSAP achievement at 80% proficiency level designated by CDE.
- The attendance rate will meet or exceed 95%.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank	**Reading Lang. Math** 3rd 75 80 74 6th 73 73 72	**Reading Lang. Math** 3rd 70 73 78 6th 87 85 86
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 68% proficient or above (75% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 52% proficient or above (47% district average) Third grade reading 82% proficient or above (80% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 85% district 81 % **4th grade** school 75% 58% district 74% 49% **7th grade** school 77% 73% district 76% 60%
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National percentile rank	**Reading Lang. Math Core** Kindergarten 94 91 85 87 1st grade 76 80 73 78 2nd grade 84 82 76 84 3rd grade 66 70 74 70 4th grade 79 78 82 81 5th grade 66 66 75 69 6th grade 81 79 91 85 7th grade 75 75 79 77	**Reading Lang. Math Core** Kindergarten 92 93 81 87 1st grade 82 83 75 82 2nd grade 70 71 72 72 3rd grade 75 79 78 78 4th grade 78 72 81 78 5th grade 77 75 83 80 6th grade 67 66 75 70
Attendance Rate		96.9%
Parent Involvement		90% of parents volunteer an average of 40 hours/family 14,000 total volunteer hours

RENAISSANCE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Douglas County School District

Location:	Parker (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	20.2
Enrollment:	286	**Percent Minority:**	7.7%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	60	**Percent Special Education:**	7.0%

MISSION: To provide a Renaissance environment of vigorous intellectual, artistic and physical activity where students develop the academic skills, passion and responsibility for learning, while producing quality work.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Renaissance School assesses students to determine their learning and information processing styles and develops a Personalized Education Plan for each student. Students learn in multi-age classrooms. Learning is integrated from many subject areas and connects to real life experiences of students through the use of investigations. The school gives special attention to developing learning opportunities that identify and nurture the creative spark in each child.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors, comprised of nine parents, two community members and two administrators. The board sets policy for the school. The principal is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The school will maintain or exceed a 95% attendance rate.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and math on their CSAP scores.
- Terra Nova scores in math and language arts will increase by 2 percentile points.
- Students will be able to assess their own learning through the use of portfolios and will set appropriate goals for themselves.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank	**Reading Lang. Math** 3rd 69.0 64.5 84.0 4th 72.5 66.5 73.0 5th 68.0 53.0 60.0 6th 59.7 61.0 44.0 7th 75.0 61.7 62.0	**Reading Lang. Math** 3rd 67 60 75 4th 84 83 61 5th 82 80 69 6th 61 63 60 7th n/a due to small sample size	**Reading Lang. Math** 6th 75 68 69
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 68% proficient or above (75% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 45% proficient or above (46% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 61% proficient or above (70% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 48% proficient or above (47% district average) **Third grade reading:** 74% proficient or above (80% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 83% district 81 % **4th grade** school 77% 43% district 74% 49% **7th grade** school 63% 38% district 76% 60%
Attendance Rate	94.67%	92.3%	90%
Student Exhibits	Student oral and multimedia presentations demonstrate increases in research and presentation skills between term 1 and 4 for all grade levels, K-7.	Student oral and multimedia presentations demonstrate increases in research and presentation skills between term 1 and 4 for all grade levels, K-8.	

COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Durango School District 9-R

Location:	Durango (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	23.3
Enrollment:	140	**Percent Minority:**	25.0%
Grade Levels:	K-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	26.4%
Waiting List:	not reported	**Percent Special Education:**	10.7%

MISSION: The mission of the Community of Learners is to provide a positive, mutually respectful environment in which students, parents and teachers share a commitment to an experience of optimal, individualized learning that leads to a lifelong love of learning, as well as a high level of personal achievement.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Community of Learners features student-centered and self-directed learning, individual learning plans and learning in the community. Students participate in service learning and internships. The school combines a commitment to high standards for basic skills with a desire to rethink the total school experience, including the traditional roles of stakeholders, the nature of curriculum and school governance.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of five parents and two community members, makes policy decisions for the school. The Administrator/Lead Teacher and Team Teachers make daily operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- 100% of Community of Learners students will utilize an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) created by the "triad" – the student, a parent and a COL teacher/advisor. The ILP will articulate goals appropriate to the developmental and academic level of the students.
- 90% of Community of Learners students will reach a satisfactory level of achievement of their individual goals and will complete, to a satisfactory level, the learning experiences which are outlined in their ILPs.
- Community of Learners will utilize the Colorado state content standards and the state mandated assessments to further academic, social and personal growth of students and to help the parents, students and teachers set student goals..
- Community of Learners will demonstrate proficiency in six spheres of knowledge: Community/Career Involvement, Global Awareness, Our Natural World, Interpersonal Growth, Health and Well-Being, Communication Skills and Creative Process.
- 100% of Community of Learners students will participate in service learning experiences on a regular and ongoing basis.
- In order to create a healthy, safe and nurturing climate for students, COL will emphasize the personal growth, learning, physical health and psychological well-being of staff, parents and other adult community members.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS - Form K and L)* Grade level equivalent	***Composite Score*** 3rd grade 3.63 4th 4.67 5th 5.73 6th 5.96 7th 8.93 8th 8.8 9th 12.85	***Composite Score*** 4th 4.5 5th 6.5 6th 8.1 7th 6.9 8th 10.2 9th 10 10th 10.8 11th-12th 11.9 In 1997-98, ITBS scores for students who attended Community of Learners for two or more years increased by one grade level equivalent (GLE) for 67% of students, two GLEs for 31% of students and more than 3 GLEs for 11% of students	***Composite Score*** 4th na** 5th 5.7 6th 6.3 7th 8.6 8th 8.0 9th 9.6 10th 11.8 11th 10.4 12th grade na
Percentage of Students Who Participate in Service Learning		100%, representing 3,108 hours of service	95%, representing 4,256 hours of service
District 9-R Writing Assessment (replaces Stanford Writing Assessment per district policy)		Mean Raw Score on 2-12 scale: 8th grade: 5.8 11th grade: 8	Mean Raw Score on 2-12 scale: 8th grade: 5.9 11th grade: na**
Progress of Students on Individual Learning Programs Students at COL receive credits only when they **completely** achieve the goal. (In contrast to receiving a grade "C" for mastering only 70% of the material.)	As of June 30, 1997, 72% of COL students have successfully transcripted 100% of the coursework in which they enrolled.	As of June 30, 1998, 55% of COL students have successfully transcripted 100% of the coursework, 43% have work that is still in progress and 2% received "No credit" for their coursework.	As of June 30, 1999, 60% of COL students have successfully transcripted 100% of the coursework.
Attendance	95%	93%	85%

** The number of students taking the test was too small to report the results.

THE EXCEL SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Durango School District 9-R

Location:	Durango (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	13.4
Enrollment:	103	**Percent Minority:**	15.5%
Grade Levels:	6-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	19.6%
Waiting List:	0	**Percent Special Education:**	12.6%

MISSION: The EXCEL School, a school of choice, is a dynamic educational environment whose participants are willing to take risks as they foster educational excellence and cultivate personal, intellectual and emotional growth, responsibility and citizenship. The school will be a safe, nurturing environment which values the individual, recognizes diversity of learning styles and teaching methods and encourages innovation in teaching while maintaining high academic standards. In cooperation with Fort Lewis College, EXCEL will serve as a professional development center for the region.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The EXCEL School's curriculum emphasizes basic skills, critical thinking and problem solving, technology and community service. Every student has an individual learning plan, which serves as a three-way contract between the parent, teacher and the student.

GOVERNANCE: The School's Governing Board, comprised of two community members and five parents, makes policy decisions. The principal is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will master the Durango School District standards.
- Students will make progress toward agreed upon contracts to excel (individual learning plans).
- Students will achieve at or above grade level.
- The school will attain an attendance rate of 100%.
- Parents will participate in the school at a rate of 95%.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Composite Scores	**Average grade level equivalent** 6th grade - 7.8 7th grade - 8.5 8th grade - 11.2 **National Percentile Rank:** (National average is 50%) **Grade 6 7 8** Reading 68 62 70 Lang. 50 48 64 Math 59 53 56 Composite 63 56 68	Not reported	**Average grade level equivalent** 8th grade - 9.6 **National percentile rank:** 8th grade: Reading 63 Language 63 Math 53 Composite 57
Iowa Test of Educational Development (11th grade students)	National Percentile Rank, composite score: 44 Grade Level Equivalent: 12.66	Not reported	National Percentile Rank, composite score: 44 Grade Level Equivalent: 11.0
District Math Standards Assessment (% of students who are proficient in standards for five domains: measurement, number sense, geometry, algebra and statistics)	Excel mean raw score: 54.3 District mean raw score: 53.7	Not reported	Excel mean raw score: 51.0 District mean raw score: 52.8
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 71% proficient or above (69% district average) **7th grade writing:** 67% proficient or above (52% district average)
Attendance Rate	95%	Not reported	93%
Parent Involvement	2,086 hours volunteered 72% of parents volunteered	Not reported	3,287 hours volunteered 75% of parents volunteered

EAGLE COUNTY CHARTER

Sponsoring District: Eagle County School District

Location:	Wolcott (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	Not reported
Enrollment:	106	**Percent Minority:**	9.6%
Grade Levels:	5-10		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	500	**Percent Special Education:**	8.4%

MISSION: In recognition of human diversity of learning styles, the Eagle County Charter Academy will provide a dynamic educational environment of choice for all learners. Our educators will focus on the individual to help students achieve a high standard of academic performance by employing innovative and flexible teaching methods and cultivating personal growth and flexibility.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school stresses strong core academics, parental involvement, block scheduling, small class size, personalized learning plans and mentors.

GOVERNANCE: The school has a seven member board (seven parents and three staff) that makes policy decisions. The principal is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- 100% of students will achieve at least a 75% grade point average.
- 75% of students will score above 50 percentile on standardized tests.
- 95% of students will demonstrate at least 9 months academic growth each year.
- Students will achieve an average score of 3 on district writing and math assessments.
- School attendance will exceed 95%.
- The annual school climate survey will reflect 85% positive responses.
- 75% of all students will read at or above grade level.
- 100% parent attendance for fall conferences.
- 100% of students (who remain in the district) will return to the school for the following year.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) core test series National percentile rank National average is 50%	***Reading Language*** 5th 55 48 6th 74 70 7th 82 75 8th 77 67 ***Math Composite*** 5th 56 52 6th 73 73 7th 79 79 8th 68 71 (Spring 1997)	***Reading Language*** 5th 65 66 6th 61 62 7th 70 70 8th 76 79 ***Math Composite*** 5th 69 67 6th 64 61 7th 68 71 8th 74 81 (Spring 1998)	***Reading Language*** 7th 59 58 8th 75 69 9th 61 69 10th 84 74 ***Math Total*** 7th 55 57 8th 64 70 9th 58 60 10th 84 78 (Spring 1999)
Terra Nova Median national percentile			***Reading Language*** 5th 86 85 6th 66 71 ***Math Total*** 5th 74 88 6th 77 73
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 53% proficient or above (54% district average) **7th grade writing:** 38% proficient or above (37% district average)
District Writing Assessment (Average Score on 5-point test, 5 is highest score)	3.78 (Spring 1997)		3.35
Grade Point Average % of students maintaining 75% GPA or better	89.35% (66% maintained 85% or better)	90.25%	93%
Attendance	92%	91%	96%
Parent Satisfaction % who gave an overall approval rating	98%	97%	
Parent attendance at fall conferences	100%	100%	100%
Parent Involvement Number of volunteer hours	4,500	5,300 hours	6,000 hours
Re-enrollment rate	98%	96%	96%

ELBERT COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Elizabeth School District

Location: Elizabeth (rural)
Enrollment: 156
Grade Levels: K-8
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: 76

Student/Teacher Ratio: not reported
Percent Minority: 10.9%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 0%
Percent Special Education: 4.5%

MISSION: The mission of ECCS is to help guide students in the development of their character and academic potential through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program. This mission will be accomplished through the use of the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence with an emphasis on a "back-to-basics" approach.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a detailed, explicit and systematic sequence of grant-specific content that can be taught consistently year after year. This core content is organized to spiral through the grade levels, becoming more sophisticated and detailed in each successive grade. In addition to the Core Knowledge Sequence, ECCS emphasizes the teaching of basic skills with a traditional and conventional approach, in a self-contained educational environment. The school's academically oriented program is organized so that the entire class generally works as a single group on grade level material, with ability grouping occurring where necessary. Emphasis is placed on the basic foundations for an academically sound education: reading (with emphasis on phonics), mathematics, English, grammar, geography, history, government, penmanship, spelling, fine arts, physical education and science. Strict discipline and order is maintained. No student is allowed to disrupt the education of other students.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of five parents. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The school will implement the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence.
- The attendance rate will meet or exceed the average district elementary school.
- The voluntary re-enrollment rate in years two through four will be 100%.
- ECCCS will set discipline standards that are enforced fairly and consistently.
- Median scores in all subject areas will increase by 5% annually.
- The average median attainment level in all subjects for all grade levels will be 80% or above.
- ECCS strongly encourages parental involvement, 40 hours per family.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	**Core Score** 3rd grade 55 4th grade 61 5th grade 50 6th grade 63	**Core Score** 3rd grade 59 4th grade 72 5th grade 79 6th grade 60 7th grade 77
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 65% proficient or above (% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 71% proficient or above (% district average) **Third grade reading:** 41% proficient or above (% district average)	**% proficient or above** Reading Writing **3rd grade** school 77% district 74% **4th grade** school 64% 50% district 70% 39% **7th grade** school 67% 54% district 69% 55%
Attendance Rate		93%
Retention Rate		89%
Parent Satisfaction	90%	91%

MARBLE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Gunnison School District

Location:	Marble (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	9.5
Enrollment:	17	**Percent Minority:**	0%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	0	**Percent Special Education:**	35.3%

MISSION: The mission of the Marble Charter School is to provide guided opportunities for students to realize high levels of academic achievement, within a learning environment that encompasses natural and cultural resources from the community. The school develops its instructional program to exceed district standards and to provide each student with frequent self-rewarding successes. Marble Charter School expects its students, with full support of their families, to strive for excellence in all aspects of this learning process.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: "The Marble Charter School will respect each child as a unique individual. Respect allows and promotes choice, trust and independence. Respect accepts children where they are and encourages and congratulates them for their efforts. We believe that a child who feels respected will feel secure and be able to take risks. We believe that one of our basic roles, as a school, is to encourage an attitude of questioning. Thus, our own behavior should model the use of observation, questioning and experimenting as a means of gaining knowledge. We will encourage and foster creativity, enabling children to be successful at their own levels. We believe that students learn best when the curriculum is integrated and taught holistically. Therefore, we will organize our instructional time and materials around topics that lend themselves naturally to the integration of curriculum content areas. In order to accomplish this, we will pool our personnel resources. We will work cooperatively within the community, encouraging each and every one to participate in the teaching of our students."

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of six parents, one staff member and two community representatives, makes policy decisions for the school. The Head Teacher makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Identify any potentially "at risk" student.
- Meet or exceed district standards in both the sponsoring district and Roaring Fork School District.
- Each student will have an individualized learning plan that will help him or her successfully develop academic skills as well as the self-esteem and independence necessary for continued educational success.
- The school will achieve an attendance rate that meets or exceeds that of the average elementary school in the district.
- The school will measure student achievement by establishing a baseline the first semester. The goal is to demonstrate increases in the annual median test scores in all subjects for at least 70% of the students.
- Parents will participate at a rate of 90%; the total amount of volunteer time will exceed 10% of paid staff time.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
NWEA Levels Test		In the period from December 1997 to April 1998, 78% of students showed more than a half year's growth in reading, and 44% showed more than a full year's growth. In math, 78% of students showed more than a half year's growth in reading, and 75% showed more than a full year's growth.	From fall 1998 to spring 1999, 66% of students showed two or more years of growth in math, according to RIT scores on the NWEA Levels Test. In Reading, 62% of our students exceeded the expected one year growth according to their RIT scores.
Parent Involvement	100% have contributed at least 5-10 hours; many families contribute that much time each week.	100% of families contribute time to the school	100%
Attendance Rate	96%	91.5%	94%

NOTE: CSAP results are not reported for this school because fewer than 16 students took the test in each year.

COLLEGIATE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Littleton (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	17.1
Enrollment:	171	**Percent Minority:**	7.0%
Grade Levels:	7-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	4.6%
Waiting List:	50	**Percent Special Education:**	11.6 %

Note: Collegiate Academy operated as Sci Tech Academy Charter School during its first three years of operation.

MISSION: Collegiate Academy, a prototype 21st century school, uses state-of-the-art technology to provide a sound educational environment grounded in the fundamental skills of a traditional college preparatory curriculum. The environment will be individually structured to optimize each student's growth, so that all students, including "at-risk" pupils and those who are challenged with learning difficulties, will acquire a first-class education.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Collegiate Academy's curriculum philosophy emphasizes science and math, cultural literacy, communication skills, technology articulation and a balanced liberal arts approach. The curriculum is highly interdisciplinary, connecting facts, skills and processes as they are connected in the real world. Scheduling is flexible; emphasis is on achievement, not time spent. The school day is extended, from 7 am to 5 p.m. Students have some control over how they meet the school's academic requirements.

GOVERNANCE: Collegiate Academy's Board of Directors, comprised of seven parents, one staff member and two students (who are non-voting members), set policy for the school. The school's Director is responsible for day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- All students will complete Collegiate Academy's requirements at the "Mastery" level (grade A or B) and 20% of all students will earn a "Distinguished" rating (grade A+). These requirements will incorporate state and local requirements for graduation.
- Each student will be encouraged to attempt one Advanced Placement exam.
- The school will work to increase the number of students doing individual study, large projects, and integrated learning and reduce the number of traditional class periods.
- 60% of students will attain a GPA of 3.0 or better.
- 100% of students will graduate.
- The school will attain or exceed a 90% attendance rate.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National percentile rank 50% is the national average	**Grade 7 10** Reading 63 59 Writing 43 52 Math 54 45 Battery 52 49	**Grade 7 10** Reading 63 63 Writing 53 56 Math 58 63 Battery 57 61	**Grade 7 10** Reading 59 70 Writing 53 66
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 71% proficient of above (61% district average) **7th grade writing:** 39% proficient or above (45% district average)
Percentage of Students with GPA	75% of students have a GPA of 3.0 or better	75% of students have a GPA of 3.0 or better	75% of students have a GPA of 3.0 or better
Graduation Rate	100%	75%	92%
Attendance	94%	89%	90%

COMMUNITY INVOLVED CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Lakewood (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	19.0
Enrollment:	264	**Percent Minority:**	14.4%
Grade Levels:	K-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	17.8%
Waiting List:	220	**Percent Special Education:**	15.2%

MISSION: To provide a personalized Pre-K-12 education in a nurturing and challenging environment which develops the whole person through the advisory system, choice, self-direction, experiential learning, shared responsibility and lifelong learning.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Upon entering CICS, all students are assigned a staff advisor with whom they, along with their parents, develop personal learning plans. The total student population is divided into three developmental areas, or "seasons": Season One (preschool -3), Season Two (grades 4-6), Seasons Three, Four and Five (grades 7-12). Movement from one Season to another requires that students demonstrate that they have met certain expectations and completed a "passage." The Season expectations are clustered into the Intellectual, Personal, Social and Creative Domains. They consist of 48 discrete learning outcomes. The passages are personally challenging projects developed by students to demonstrate their ability to apply their skills in the real world. CICS's primary instructional method is experiential. The school year is divided into 4-week blocks. During each block, a student enrolls in one "intensive," or interdisciplinary, thematic, multiage experience, often culminating in an extended excursion and encompassing many content areas as well as service learning.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of three staff members, three students, three parents, an administrator and two community members, sets policy for the school. The principal and the management leaders make day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will master basic skills in literacy and numeracy, including artistic literacy.
- The school's curriculum for all levels will comply with the Jefferson County Model Content standards.
- Each student will develop the inner qualities essential to joyous and effective learning and living, to include: self-esteem, self-confidence, self-initiative, self-reliance, self-discipline, self-knowledge, self-evaluation and self-respect.
- Each student will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and practices which promote social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth, mental health, and intellectual and creative development.
- Each student's portfolio will show regular growth and improvement.
- Improve retention rate (by 3% for 1997-98) and double the number of graduated students (to 20 for 1997-98 school year).

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS short form)** National percentile rank National average is 50%	***Grade*** ***3*** ***5*** *Reading* 28 49 *Language* 32 53 *Math* 38 41 ***Grade*** *7* ***10*** *Reading* 55 69 *Language* 47 53 *Math* 53 32	Insufficient numbers of students in grades 3, 5 and 7 took the ITBS for the scores to be publicly reported. **Grade 10** *Reading* 47 *Language* 36 *Math* 52	***Grade*** *7* ***10*** *Reading* 47 61 *Writing* 61 51 *Math* 46 56
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 32% proficient or above (61% district average) **7th grade writing:** 11% proficient or above 45% district average
Number of Graduating Students	5	8	20
Parent Involvement (Number of Volunteer Hours)	1,200	1,200	1,873
Retention Rate (% of students who continued their education at CICS the following school year)	63.4%	78.0%	79%
Attendance Rate	90.2%	85.2% (Elementary - 90% Middle - 87% High School - 83%)	92%

NOTE: CSAP results are not reported for 3rd and 4th grades because fewer than 16 students took the test in each year.

** The school does not consider the ITBS to be a valid measure of what students know and are able to do. Standardized tests, such as the ITBS, do not deal with 75% of the school's curriculum: social, creative and personal skills.

EXCEL ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Arvada (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	15.3
Enrollment:	132	**Percent Minority:**	6.4%
Grade Levels:	K - 8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	10.9%
Waiting List:	34	**Percent Special Education:**	4.5%

MISSION: Excel Academy's mission is that graduates are capable of independent, critical thought and life-long cooperative learning.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Excel's program features:
A rigorous academic program delivered in both traditional and non-traditional ways. The curriculum is focused on basic academic skills and core content in social studies, science and literature. Teaching methods include whole class instruction and non-traditional methods such as experiential, reality-linked and differentiated instruction.
Multiage classes using student-centered methods. Students spend two years with the same teacher.
High expectations. A student's self-image is strongly influenced by the teacher's estimation of the child's ability. For that reason, Excel students are viewed as gifted, and are taught to view themselves and others in that way. Students are taught to take responsibility for their learning and to be resourceful in their studies.
Low student-to-teacher ratio. Excel's standard class size is 18 students per teacher.
Required Parent Involvement.
Student Learning Plans. These plans report student progress toward pre-established goals in each subject area. Because the students participate in setting some of their goals, the plan helps them take responsibility for their own learning.
Year-Round School. This schedule promotes continuous, uninterrupted learning. The school year is comprised of five sessions with four breaks and a summer recess of no more than four weeks.

GOVERNANCE: The Executive Committee, comprised of three parents, one administrator and one community member, sets policy for the school. The Director makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- By 2001, 90% of all students in grades K-3 will read on or above grade level as measured by the DRA.
- The number of students scoring in the proficient or advanced range of the CSAP reading subtest will increase by 5% per year for students in 3rd and 4th grades.
- By 2001, 55% of students in grades 2-8 will score "proficient" or "advanced" on the 6-trait writing assessment. (4/98 baseline is 40%.)
- By 2001, increase the percentage of students, grades 3 and above, who perform at or above grade level in math achievement to 87%. (4/98 baseline is 77%.)
- By 2001, 80% of all students will have less than 10 absences (excused or unexcused) per year. (1997-98 benchmark: 52%.)
- By 2001, the number of referrals from Session 2 to Session 4 will decrease by 30% in each school year. (1997-98 benchmark: 23% reduction in referrals.)

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (National percentile rank) 50% is the national average	**Grade 3 5 6 7** Reading 43 48 68 74 Writing 41 44 64 64 Math 37 50 55 74 Battery 38 51 63 71 **(Spring 1997)**	**Grade 3 4 5** Reading 37 55 76 Writing 75 60 65 Math 70 34 54 Battery 75 49 69 **Grade 6 7 8** Reading 60 59 84 Writing 60 64 64 Math 62 53 67 Battery 64 59 72 **(Spring 1998)**	**Grade 3 4 5** Reading 64 na 61 Writing 60 na 65 Math 59 na 61
Iowa Test of Basic Skills Analysis of Change - Measure progress of same cohort of students over time	**Grade 3 5** Reading 37(49) 49(65) Writing 46(53) 51(57) Math 47(54) 50(55) Battery 42(52) 50(56) (Analysis of change from **April 1995 to April 1997**. Scores are shown for Excel and (Jefferson County School District)	**Grade 6 7** Reading 44 56 Writing 56 59 Math 48 52 Battery 52 56 (Analysis of change from **April 1997 to April 1998**. Scores are shown for Excel students only.)	
Parent Involvement	8,878 volunteer hours contributed 100% of families participated	7,333 volunteer hours contributed 100% of families participated	7,028 volunteer hours contributed 100% of families participated
Parent Satisfaction % of respondents whose expectations were met or exceeded	Emphasizes rigorous academics: 86% Provides for individual learning styles: 68% Teachers promote excellence: 92% Extends classroom into community: 88%	Emphasizes rigorous academics: 88% Provides for individual learning styles: 89% Teachers promote excellence: 81% Extends classroom into community: 89%	Emphasizes rigorous academics: 91% Provides for individual learning styles: 87% Teachers promote excellence: 99% Extends classroom into community: 79%
Attendance	94%	K-6: 95% 7-8: 94%	K-8: 98%

JEFFERSON ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL - ELEMENTARY

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Broomfield (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	16.6
Enrollment:	306	**Percent Minority:**	6.9%
Grade Levels:	K - 6		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	2.6%
Waiting List:	1,100	**Percent Special Education:**	9.8%

MISSION: The mission of Jefferson Academy is to establish an environment where students attain their highest academic and character potential. This mission will be accomplished through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program, in the context of discipline and respect, and a high degree of parental involvement.

VISION STATEMENT: Through the cooperation of parents, teachers, students and the educational and business communities, Jefferson Academy will create a learning environment that engenders growth in character, academic achievement, and the love of learning, resulting in responsible, productive citizens.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Jefferson Academy uses the Core Knowledge Foundation's Scope and Sequence and a fundamental, "back-to-basics" approach. The school emphasizes the teaching of basic skills with a traditional and conventional approach in a self-contained educational environment. The entire class generally works as a single group on grade level material with ability grouping occurring as necessary. Strict discipline and order is maintained.

GOVERNANCE: A Board of Directors (comprised of six parents and two principals, one from the junior high school) is responsible for establishing school policy and for all aspects of the school. The principal in consultation with staff, makes daily operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Reading and language scores will improve a minimum of five national percentile points.
- Achieve an average mean attainment level of 80% or better in all subjects for all grade levels on standardized tests.
- The school will maintain an attendance rate of 95% or better.
- 75% of students performing at least one year above grade level will show 9-months academic growth.
- 90% of parents will re-enroll their children in the school.
- Volunteer hours will exceed 10% of the total staffing hours.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS - Form G) National percentile rank National average is 50% This test is administered in the spring	*Vocabulary* *Reading* K 71 76 1st grade 83 74 2nd 83 83 3rd 70 71 4th 71 73 5th 72 80 6th 77 76 *Lang Spelling* *Math* K 59 73 1st grade 88 86 2nd 89 91 3rd 82 79 4th 81 85 5th 79 84 6th 71 77	*Vocabulary* *Reading* K 78 82 1st grade 84 76 2nd 83 83 3rd 74 74 4th 70 71 5th 77 75 6th 72 79 *Lang Spelling* *Math* K 68 76 1st grade 96 71 2nd 89 81 3rd 85 84 4th 76 75 5th 77 87 6th 76 79	*Vocabulary* *Reading* K na na 1st grade 91 90 2nd 78 78 3rd 79 76 4th 82 84 5th 87 84 6th 76 75 *Lang Spelling* *Math* K na na 1st grade 96 89 2nd 84 74 3rd 75 73 4th 80 83 5th 89 91 6th 80 74
Colorado Student Achievement Test (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 70% proficient or above (62% district average) **Fourth grade writing:** 57% proficient or above (37% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 73% proficient or above (64% district average) **Fourth grade writing:** 61% proficient or above (43% district average) **Third grade reading:** 94% proficient or above (71% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 89% proficient or above (64% district average) **Fourth grade writing:** 64% proficient or above (38% district average) **Third grade reading:** 88% proficient or above (71% district average)
ITBS - Longitudinal Data National percentile rank, composite score	Students who have completed **4, 5 & 6th grades** at Jefferson Academy (JA) Fall 94 40 / Spring 97 76 Students who have completed **3rd, 4th & 5th** grades at JA Fall 94 37 / Spring 97 81 Students who have completed **2nd, 3rd and 4th** grades at JA Fall 94 31 / Spring 97 79 Students who have completed **1st, 2nd & 3rd** grades at JA Spring 95 71/Spring 97 77 Students who have completed **1st & 2nd** grades at JA Spring 96 88/Spring 97 87	Students who have completed **3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th grades** at Jefferson Academy (JA) Fall 94 37 / Spring 98 79 Students who have completed **2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th** grades at JA Fall 94 31 / Spring 98 82 Students who have completed **1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th** grades at JA Spring 95 71/Spring 97 75 Students who have completed **1st, 2nd & 3rd** grades at JA Spring 96 88/Spring 98 83 Students who have completed **1st & 2nd** grades at JA Spring 97 85/Spring 98 86	Students who have completed **2nd-6th grades at** Jefferson Academy (JA) Fall 94 / Spring 99 : 40 / 77 Students who have completed **1st-5th grades** at JA Spring 96/Spring 99 72 / 86 Students who have completed **1st - 4th** grades at JA Spring 96/Spring 99 83 / 84 Students who have completed **1st - 3rd** grades at JA Spring 97/Spring 98 85 / 67 Students who have completed **1st & 2nd** grades at JA Spring 98/Spring 99 85 / 80
Parent Involvement Volunteer Hours	9,121 (22% of total staffing hours)	10,710 (25% of total staffing hours)	11,759
Parent Satisfaction % of parents who agree that the school meets children's needs	99%	99%	99%
Re-enrollment	98%	99%	97.7%
Attendance	97.1%	95.3%	96.2%

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JEFFERSON ACADEMY - JUNIOR HIGH

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Broomfield (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	18.3
Enrollment:	120	**Percent Minority:**	8.8%
Grade Levels:	7-9		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	7.0%
Waiting List:	190	**Percent Special Education:**	not available

MISSION: The mission of Jefferson Academy Junior High is to establish an environment where students attain their highest academic and character potential. This mission will be accomplished through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program, in the context of discipline and respect, and a high degree of parental involvement. Additionally, this mission will be accomplished through the use of the Core Knowledge Sequence (as researched and reported by Dr. E.D. Hirsch of the University of Virginia) and a fundamental, "back-to-knowledge" approach. This Core Knowledge Goal will be supplemented by the Junior High matrixing Core Knowledge with the state standards and assessment goals for grades 5-8.

VISION STATEMENT: Through the cooperation of parents, teachers, students and the educational and business communities, Jefferson Academy Junior High will create a learning environment that engenders growth in character, academic achievement, and the love of learning, resulting in responsible, productive citizens.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Jefferson Academy Junior High incorporates the state's academic standards in reading, writing, mathematics, history, geography and science with the seventh and eighth grade Core Knowledge Foundation Sequence. It uses a coordinated humanities approach to the Core Knowledge Curriculum which was initiated by the book *Cultural Literacy* written by E.D. Hirsch. Coordinated Humanities is mixing the study of literature, history, geography, government, economics, music and art along a history timeline. Other subjects such as science and technology are taught through interdisciplinary instructional units. Writing is incorporated throughout the academic program.

GOVERNANCE: A Board of Directors (comprised of six parents and two principals, one from the elementary school) is responsible for establishing school policy and for all aspects of the school. The principal, in consultation with staff, makes daily operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Reading and language scores of students who are continuously enrolled will improve a minimum of three national percentile points based on the NCE mean for the ITBS.
- 75% or more of students in grades 7 and 8 will be able to create and produce a product using visual, audio or printed means that relates to or supports the curriculum.
- The school will maintain an attendance rate of 95% or better.
- 75% of students will attain 75% or better on basic skills scores (reading, writing, math) as measured by the ITBS, national percentile rank.
- To continue the development of grade level content standards for Reading, Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Maintain or decrease the suspension and expulsion rate.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - National percentile rank National average is 50%	**Grade 7** Reading 63 Int Writing 63 Math 66 Composite 64	**Grade 7th 8** Reading 70 68 Integrated Writing 78 68 Math 71 71 Composite 74 70 Science 85 71 Soc Studies 79 74	**Grade 7th 8** Reading 71 68 Integrated Writing 76 75 Math 71 71 Composite 74 72 Science 73 77 Soc Studies 69 79
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 85% proficient or above (District average: 61%) **7th grade writing:** 68% proficient or above (District average: 45%)
Percentage of students in grades 7 and 8 who created and produced a product using visual, audio or printed means that supports curriculum.		90%	90%
Attendance Rate		94.2%	97.3%
Re-enrollment Rate		90%	97.3%
Parent Satisfaction % of parents who agree that the school meets their children's needs		98%	90%
Parent Involvement Number of hours volunteered by parents or family members		1,927 hours (50% of families participated)	2,102 hours (55% of parents participated)

LINCOLN ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Arvada (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	23.8
Enrollment:	209	**Percent Minority:**	10.0%
Grade Levels:	K-6		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	1.0%
Waiting List:	396	**Percent Special Education:**	0%

MISSION: The mission of Lincoln Academy is to help students attain their highest social and academic potential through an academically rigorous content rich educational program.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Lincoln Academy uses the Core Knowledge Sequence (as developed by Dr. E. D. Hirsch, Jr.) and a traditional fundamental, "back-to-basics" approach. The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a detailed, explicit and systematic sequence of grade-specific content that can be taught consistently year after year. This core content is organized to spiral through the grade levels, becoming more sophisticated and detailed in each successive grade.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of five parents. The principal serves on the board in a non-voting capacity. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will demonstrate a 5% increase in median scores on standardized tests and attain the 80% level in all subject areas.
- The school will maintain a stable enrollment, demonstrated by a 100% re-enrollment rate.
- The attendance rate will meet or exceed 95%.
- The rate of disciplinary referrals will be less than 3%.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Third grade reading:** 91% proficient or above (71% district average) Note: 4th grade scores are not reported because fewer than 16 students took the assessment.	**Fourth grade reading:** 85% proficient or above (64% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 58% proficient or above (38% district average) **Third grade reading:** 96% proficient or above (71% district average)
Attendance Rate		90%
Disciplinary Referrals		Less than 3%
Re-enrollment Rate		
Parent Involvement		1,110 hours volunteered. 56% of parents volunteered

MAGNET SCHOOL OF THE DEAF

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location: Lakewood (suburban)
Enrollment: 16
Grade Levels: preK-6
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: not reported

Student/Teacher Ratio: 6.5
Percent Minority: 12.5%

Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 37.5%
Percent Special Education: 100%

MISSION: The mission of the Magnet School of the Deaf is to provide for deaf children, early childhood through 12th grade, an education that is "deaf-friendly," supportive of the child's home and managed by parents, the deaf community and the school personnel.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: MSD centers education on successful language acquisition and effective communication. The school teachers students American Sign Language (ASL). This language is valued for its own sake and provides the cornerstone for the students' successful acquisition of English as a second language. Instruction and services are individualized for each student and emphasize problem solving and critical thinking. The MSD curriculum encompasses deaf history and deaf culture.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of two parents, one teacher and two community members. The Board is responsible for setting policy for the school. The Academic Team Leader is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter application and school improvement plans):

- The school will further implement and utilize the district's curriculum.
- The school will accommodate/challenge each student with academic goals set in an Individualized Education Plan.
- The school will ensure that the Colorado State Performance Assessment is provided.
- The school will meet or exceed the district average attendance rate.
- The school will maintain its enrollment.
- The school will explore ways to build literacy interest in its students.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*		
DRA K-3 Literacy Test*		Of the eight students tested, one scored at or above grade level and seven scored below grade level.
Attendance		90%

* In 1998-99, MSD administered the 3rd grade CSAP reading, the 4th grade CSAP reading, DRA K-3 literacy, and an American Sign Language receptive/expressive language development instrument. Five students took the CSAP and seven students took the DRA. The CSAP scores were not reported as a result of CDE's policy not to publish scores for schools in which fewer than 16 students took the test. The authorizing district waived the requirement that MSD administer the ITBS and the Magnet School of the Deaf is trying to secure an appropriate substitute assessment designed for administration to deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

The school notes that providing good student achievement data is particularly challenging for several reasons. First, the small numbers and diverse ages of students limit the use of averages and other statistical tools. Second, most students arrive at MSD with significant delays in learning, making data on relative progress more useful (at least in the short term) than data comparing the school to other schools. Finally, MSD staff have observed that students often appeared to have knowledge or skills that were not reflected in the assessment results because the test was administered in English. While English-based testing is appropriated for some purposes (most obviously, to test student attainment of the language arts curriculum), its use may not be fair or accurate for purposes of testing other knowledge or skills. The school plans to explore how administration of tests using American Sign Language may affect student results.

MONTESSORI PEAKS ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Jefferson County School District

Location:	Littleton (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	13
Enrollment:	188	**Percent Minority:**	11.7%
Grade Levels:	K-6		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	32	**Percent Special Education:**	3.8%

MISSION: Achieve high standards of individual excellence by guiding the whole student through an exceptional educational experience. We will….

…guide the whole student by enabling development intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially to the fullest extent possible.
…achieve educational excellence while fostering the eager, autonomous learning of all students.
…maintain a financially viable educational institution.
…set a uniform, measurable academic standard and ensure each student achieves or exceeds it.
…create and maintain a strong community atmosphere and embrace diversity among ourselves.
…instill a love of learning in all of our students.
…encourage an overall appreciation and respect for the natural world in which we live.
…develop each student's independence, responsibility and respect for others.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school adheres to the Montessori philosophy and methodology as the foundation of its academic programs. The Montessori curriculum is highly academically oriented and rigorous. The school features low ratios between faculty members and students, academics in the curriculum in pre-school classrooms, multi-age classrooms at all grade levels and a learning environment where the students are encouraged to become self-learning problem-solvers.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of seven parents, one teacher, and one community representative. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The percentage of students reading at grade level will increase to 80%, as measured by Colorado Student Achievement Program (CSAP), Development Reading Assessment (DRA) and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).
- Portfolios for all elementary school students will be developed and maintained to provide information to students, parents and subsequent teachers about each student's level of development and academic growth over time, his/her attitudes and motivation.
- Students will produce grade level appropriate work using technology.
- 100% of parents will devote at least 50 hours/family of volunteer time to the school and 100% of faculty will participate in at least one school committee.
- The school will achieve an attendance rate of 94%.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National percentile rank Total battery		3rd grade: 48% 5th grade: 56%
% of students reading at grade level	44%	77.3%
Attendance Rate		95.8%
Parent Involvement		7,085 hours volunteered 65% of parents volunteer

LEWIS PALMER CHARTER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Lewis Palmer School District

Location:	Monument (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	20.8
Enrollment:	272	**Percent Minority:**	10.3%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	177	**Percent Special Education:**	5.9%

MISSION: The mission of the Lewis Palmer Charter Academy is to improve pupil learning by creating a charter school with high, rigorous standards in a friendly, caring positive learning environment. The Academy's emphasis will be on the "Five R's" – reading, writing, arithmetic, respect and responsibility.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The setting offers traditional-type classrooms with the basic subjects taught at all grade levels. The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a coherent, grade-by-grade (K-6) content-specific curriculum guide. Both the skill-based standards of Lewis Palmer School District 38 and the state model content standards are aligned for use with the Core Knowledge Sequence. Clear knowledge goals, smaller student/teacher ratios, individualized math and reading programs, and implementation methods differentiate the curriculum at the Lewis Palmer Charter Academy from other District 38 schools.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board consists of seven parents, a teacher and the principal. The teacher and principal serve in a non-voting capacity. The Governing Board is responsible for policy decisions and the principal makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS: (from charter application and school improvement plans):

- Students will meet or exceed national standards for their grade level.
- The school will maintain an attendance rate of at least 95%
- All students will achieve a minimum of one grade level advancement during each school year.
- All students "at risk" for not achieving at least 70% in their course work will be identified and a corrective strategy will be established in consultation with the students' parents.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) GLE - grade level equivalent; NRP - National percentile rank Data shown for K-1st grade are Core totals and for grades 2-8 are Composite totals. Tests were administered in the spring of the academic year.	GLE K 1.2 1st 2.6 2nd 3.1 3rd 4.3 4th 6.1 5th 7.4 6th 9.6 7th 9.5 8th 13.4	GLE NPR K 1.2 90% 1st 2.5 81% 2nd 3.3 66% 3rd 4.3 69% 4th 6.1 75% 5th 7.4 64% 6th 9.6 74% 7th 9.5 81% 8th 13.4 81%	GLE NPR K 1.7 95% 1st 2.5 83% 2nd 3.7 81% 3rd 4.4 67% 4th 6.2 77% 5th 7.4 72% 6th 8.6 70% 7th 10.8 75% 8th 12.9 82%
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 79% proficient or above (78% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 63% proficient or above (48% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 80% proficient or above (78% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 70% proficient or above (49% district average) **Third grade reading:** 88% proficient or above (85% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 92% proficient or above (79% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 69% proficient or above (53% district average) **Third grade reading:** 77% proficient or above (81% district average) **Seventh grade reading:** 83% proficient or above (66% district average) **Seventh grade writing:** 66% proficient or above (58% district average)
Attendance Rate	95%	94%	95%
Parent Participation		10,000 hours volunteered by parents/families 89% of families participated	6,000 hours volunteered 61% of families participated

LITTLETON CHARTER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Littleton School District

Location:	Littleton (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	23.7
Enrollment:	452	**Percent Minority:**	5.8%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	4.0%
Waiting List:	900	**Percent Special Education:**	3.8%

MISSION: The mission of Littleton Academy is to provide, within the Littleton community, a content-rich, academically rigorous education with a well-defined, sequential curriculum in a safe, orderly and caring environment.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school's curriculum is based on the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence and emphasizes content skills in the development of the whole student. Core subject areas are: Reading: Open Court in K-5, SRA, Core Knowledge literature; Language Arts: Medallion, Spalding (K-5), Warriner's (6-8); Math: Saxon Math; Science: Core Knowledge topics; Social Studies: Core Knowledge topics – American History, World Civilization and Geography; and Spanish: Full instruction in grades 6-8, Introduction in grades 1-5. Instruction also is provided in Computers, Art, Music and Physical Education.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board is comprised of seven parents elected by the parent body. The Board is responsible for oversight of all school operations and determining the school policies. The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS: (From charter application and school improvement plans)

- Littleton Academy students will be expected to achieve mastery of the curriculum content. The performance target is that student grades will average 80% or better on tests of curriculum material.
- Littleton Academy students in grades 1-8 will take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) each spring. The students will show an improvement in scores for all grade levels in all subject areas.
- Littleton Academy performance on the ITBS will meet or exceed ITBS results for the Littleton Public School District.
- The average Littleton Academy score will exceed the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) results for Littleton School District and Colorado in every content area tested.
- Littleton Academy will meet all requirements of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act.
- Students who are found consistently working below grade level will be identified and will have a special plan developed for them, with input from their parents. Students who are found consistently to be working significantly above the class performance level will be identified and will have a special plan developed for them, with input from their parents.
- Littleton Academy will attain an attendance rate of 95% or better.
- Littleton Academy will maintain a stable enrollment rate of 96% of eligible students who will continue at the school through 8th grade graduation.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - Grade Level Equivalent Tests were administered in the spring of the academic year.	**Reading** **Language** K 1.6 1.9 1st 2.1 2.1 2nd 3.8 4.2 3rd 5.0 5.3 4th 5.9 6.3 5th 7.1 7.4 6th 9.2 9.8 7th 10.3 10.8 8th 11.9 12.3 **Math** **Core** K 1.7 1.7 1st 2.2 2.1 2nd 3.8 3.9 3rd 5.2 4.9 4th 5.9 6.0 5th 7.2 7.2 6th 9.2 9.4 7th 10.7 10.5 8th 12.3 12.2	**Reading** **Language** K na na 1st 2.9 2.6 2nd 3.4 3.5 3rd 5.1 4.8 4th 6.2 6.5 5th 7.0 7.6 6th 8.6 8.3 7th 10.7 11.5 8th 12.1 12.6 **Math** **Core** K na na 1st 2.5 2.6 2nd 3.5 3.5 3rd 5.3 4.9 4th 5.9 6.0 5th 7.5 7.3 6th 9.0 8.9 7th 10.9 10.9 8th 12.7 12.4 Median growth for all grades from May 1997 to May 1998 is 1.4 (one year, four months)	**Reading** **Language** K na na 1st 2.8 2.8 2nd 4.1 4.5 3rd 4.8 4.7 4th 6.7 6.3 5th 7.3 8.5 6th 8.5 10.1 7th 10.8 12.0 8th 12.4 13.4 **Math** **Core** K na na 1st 2.4 2.6 2nd 4.0 4.3 3rd 4.8 4.7 4th 6.4 7.7 5th 7.6 7.7 6th 8.8 9.2 7th 11.2 11.2 8th 12.8 12.9 Median growth for all grades from May 1998 to May 1999 is 1.9 (one year, nine months)
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**4th grade reading:** 71% proficient or above (72% district average) **4th grade writing** 54% proficient or above (47% district average)	**4th grade reading:** 78% proficient or above (72% district average) **4th grade writing** 60% proficient or above (54% district average) **3rdgrade reading:** 76% proficient or above (75% district average)	**% proficient or above** **Reading** **Writing** **3rd grade** school 88% district 75% **4th grade** school 80% 51% district 73% 46% **7th grade** school 76% 66% district 70% 59%
Mastery of Curriculum Content	Class means per class/subject ranged from 78% to 94% at the end of the school year.	Class means per class/subject ranged from 70% to 98% at the end of the school year.	Class means per class/subject ranged from 74% to 99% at the end of the school year.
Attendance Rate	97%	98%	99%
Retention Rate	93%	88%	94%
Parent Satisfaction	97%- Satisfied with what their children are being taught 90%-Satisfied with the way their children are being taught 94%-Agree that Littleton Academy meets child's educational needs	98%- Satisfied with what their children are being taught 90%-Satisfied with the way their children are being taught 94%-Agree that Littleton Academy meets child's educational needs	98%- Satisfied with what their children are being taught 88%-Satisfied with the way their children are being taught 92%-Agree that Littleton Academy meets child's educational needs

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CRESTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Moffat Consolidated School District

Location:	Crestone (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	15.7
Enrollment:	54	**Percent Minority:**	14.6%
Grade Levels:	K-9		
Opening Date:	Fall 1995	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	22.9%
Waiting List:	19	**Percent Special Education:**	0%

MISSION: The mission of Crestone Charter School is to provide a stimulating experiential program that, in a creatively structured atmosphere, nurtures each student's sense of wonder and natural desire to learn. Emphasizing academic excellence and uniqueness of character, we strive to inspire healthy responsibility with self, community and environment, both locally and globally.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Crestone emphasizes experiential and integrated learning, using multi-age groups and thematic units. Each student has an Individual Learning Plan that helps students, teachers and parents set meaningful goals for achievement. The daily schedule is designed to support interdisciplinary curriculum and the flexibility needed for tutoring, mentorships, independent study, community service and self-expression.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Council, comprised of three parents, two community members and one administrator (in a non-voting capacity), sets policy for the school. The Director makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- To offer an innovative educational program of academic excellence that integrates body, mind, emotion and spirit.
- To provide a learning environment that encourages self-esteem and respects the experiences, talents and uniqueness of every student.
- To prepare each student to be a lifelong learner through relevant education.
- To prepare each student to find his/her place in the context of human history and to comprehend the challenges we face in a changing world.
- To ensure mastery of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and artistry that meet or exceed content standards of Goals 2000.
- To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, collaborative skills and a sense of community responsibility.
- To use the natural environment as a classroom to foster appreciation for our ecosystem and the Earth as a whole.
- To engage the united efforts of parents, teachers, students and community members in the educational process and school governance.
- To participate in the nationwide effort to reform public education.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Stanford Achievement Test Grade level equivalent	**Grades: 1-2 3-5 6-8** **Reading** 62 63 51 **Math** 48 51 62 **Language** 44 47 45 **Science** 72 39 57 **Soc. Stud.** 55 63 **Complete Battery** 55 62 53 (Scores for this year are reported as National percentile rank)	**Reading** **Math** 4th 5.0 2.9 5th 5.6 6.2 6th 5.7 7.1 7th na 7.3 8th 9.6 na **Language** **Battery** 4th 3.4 3.7 5th 6.2 5.8 6th 10.1 7.0 7th 10.6 8.4 8th 11.1 10.1	**Reading** **Math** 2nd 5.6 4.2 3rd 5.4 5.4 4th 5.2 7.1 5th na na 6th 8.1 9.7 7th 11.3 9.6 8th na 8.3 9th 12.8 na **Language** **Battery** 2nd 2.8 4.6 3rd 3.2 5.2 4th 6.7 6.8 5th na na 6th 6.5 8.4 7th 8.5 9.0 8th 12.8 10.7 9th 12.8 na
Parent Involvement	1,520 hours 100% of parents volunteer	100% of parents volunteer at least 20 hours/semester	not tracked
Attendance Rate	87.6%	88.7%	94%

BATTLE ROCK CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Montezuma Cortez School District

Location:	Cortez (rural)	**Student Teacher Ratio:**	26.0
Enrollment:	26	**Percent Minority:**	12.5%
Grade Levels:	K-6		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	3	**Percent Special Education:**	4.2%

MISSION: The mission of Battle Rock School is to enrich the students through both outdoor and indoor educational studies. Education at Battle Rock will promote the sharing of responsibilities, nurturing of family values, interacting with multi-age groups, and participation in innovative hands-on lessons to prepare the student to be a decent, self-motivated contributing citizen.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Battle Rock School offers personalized learning experiences for every child. Core academic skills are taught through thematic projects. Instruction features outdoor learning, the community as classroom, multi-age groupings and acceleration based on ability. The school works closely with parents to support instruction and reinforce values.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of six parents and one community member, sets policy for the school. The Director makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- All students will obtain at least a 75% mastery level in Reading, Language and Math.
- 90% of students will perform at or above grade level as measured by the standard testing instruments of the district.
- The school will attain an attendance rate of at least 95%.
- The school will attain a 100% graduation rate (measured by grade level promotion.)

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)-Form K complete battery % of students performing at or above grade level	Language - 61% / 64% Reading - 78% / 92% Math - 57% / 72% **(Fall 1996 / Spring 1997)**	Language - 62.5%/ 82% Reading - 82% / 100% Math - 50% / 75% **(Fall 1997 / Spring 1998)**	Not administered
District developed "Levels Test" % of students performing at or above grade level	Data not available	All students scored at either proficient or advanced level in reading/language and math. No student had overall scores indicating "in progress."	Reading 93% 100% Math 79% 86% Fall 1998/ Spring 1999
Curriculum-Based Post Test Instruments (% of students who obtain 75% mastery of material	Language - 92% / 96% Reading - 87% / 96% Math - 86% / 84% **(Fall 1996 / Spring 1997)**	Language - 90% / 100% Reading - 80% / 100% Math - 90% / 92% **(Fall 1997 / Spring 1998)**	Language 95% / 100% Reading 95% / 100% Math 100% / 95% **(Fall 1998 / Spring9)**
Graduation Rate Measured by grade level promotion	100%	100%	100%
Attendance Rate	93%	96.6%	94%

NOTE: CSAP scores are not reported for this school because fewer than 16 students took the test in each year.

LAKE GEORGE - GUFFEY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Park RE-2 School District

Location: Lake George and Guffey (rural)
Enrollment: 165
Grade Levels: preK-8
Opening Date: Fall 1996
Waiting List: 0

Student/Teacher Ratio: 16.6
Percent Minority: 7.9%

Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 36.4%
Percent Special Education: 10.3%

MISSION: Strive for knowledge and truth in all we do, serving children's needs first.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Lake George - Guffey Charter School operates a small, rural charter school in two different sites and represents two different communities. The school is community-based and instruction is place-based. The curriculum emphasizes math and literacy. Instruction is interdisciplinary, experiential and project based.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board is comprised of three parents, two staff members, two community members and one non-voting student. The Governing Board makes policy decisions. The school administrator makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS: (from charter application and school improvement plans)

- Meet or exceed an attendance rate of 95%.
- Achieve measurable growth for all students in academic performance that meets or exceeds the expectations of the parents, students and classroom teachers.
- Increase options for preK-8 students who are currently home-schooled or are travelling long distances to attend classes.
- Improve student skills in collaboration, working in teams, problem solving and conflict resolution.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - FOR RETURNING STUDENTS ONLY	**Grade Level Equivalent:** Guffey 4th 3.6 5th 4.4 6th 6.6 Lake George 4th 4.1 5th 4.6 6th 5.9 7th 5.8 8th 7.4 **National Percentile Rank** (50% is the national average) Guffey - 58% Lake George - 53%	**Grade Level Equivalent:** Guffey 4th 4.5 5th 5.6 6th 6.3 Lake George 4th 5.2 5th 5.6 6th 6.9 7th 6.9 8th 8.1 **National Percentile Rank** (50% is the national average) Guffey - 60% Lake George - 54%	no longer administered
Slossen Math Diagnostic Survey Grade Level Equivalent			**Lake George Only** 1st 2.4 2nd 3.2 3rd 4.4 4th 4.9 5th 6.1 6th 6.5 7th 8.5 8th 7.8
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 47% proficient or above (46% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 35% proficient or above (23% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 61% proficient or above (61% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 33% proficient or above (27% district average) **Third grade reading:** 71% proficient or above (65% district average)	**Lake George / Guffey combined** **Fourth grade reading:** 63% proficient or above (64% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 32% proficient or above (32% district average) **Third grade reading:** 68% proficient or above (51% district average)
Durrell Reading Analysis Grade Equivalent Levels	1st grade average: 2.7 2nd grade average: 3.6 3rd grade average: 4.7	1st grade average: 2.7 2nd grade average: 3.6 3rd grade average: 4.7	no longer administered
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)			**Lake George Only** 1st grade avg: 1.5 2nd grade avg: 3.3 3rd grade avg: 4.0
Attendance Rate	93%	93%	93%

LIBERTY COMMON SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Poudre School District

Location:	Fort Collins (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	23.6
Enrollment:	440	**Percent Minority:**	9.5%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	13.0%
Waiting List:	1,000	**Percent Special Education:**	3.2%

MISSION: The mission of Liberty Common School is to provide excellence through a common foundation by successfully teaching a contextual body of organized knowledge, the value of a democratic society, and the skills of learning; in summary, we teach "common knowledge, common virtues, common sense."

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Liberty's educational philosophy is classical education. Classical education has as its metaphor a journey. The journey is the individual's own quest in life and includes responsibility for one's own education, which is a lifelong endeavor. The Core Knowledge Foundation's Curriculum Sequence is the framework of the school's curriculum. The *Core Knowledge Sequence* is distinguished by planned progression of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts and fine arts.

In addition, Liberty teaches specific thinking skills unique to each discipline, called "habits of mind." The school teachers the values inherent in a democratic society, such as devotion to human dignity and freedom, equal rights for all, social and economic justice, the rule of law, civility, honesty, self-respect and self-reliance. Parents work in conjunction with the staff to ensure the most effective education possible for their children.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of seven parents. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The school administration is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The mean ITBS development scores of students in all skill areas for all grade levels will increase by 7%.
- Volunteer hours contributed will equal 50% of staff hours.
- The attendance rate will meet or exceed that of the Poudre School District.
- The school will attain a 96% re-enrollment rate.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Developmental scores	**Reading Language Math** 3rd grade 182/201 177/ 191 184/201 4th grade 199/221 195/216 203/222 5th grade 214/229 204/216 210/217 6th grade 237/251 232/243 261/266 scores shown are fall 1997/ spring 1998	**Reading Language Math** 3rd - 4th grade 182/225 177/ 214 184/224 4th - 5th grade 208/233 199/229 208/233 5th - 6th grade 216/238 205/234 211/227 6th - 7th grade 239/260 252/268 232/252 7th - 8th grade 260/285 252/268 268/285 scores shown are fall 1997 / January 1999 Goal met in all skill areas in grades 3-6 and 7th grade reading. Increase for 7th grade language and math was 6%.
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 83% proficient or above (67% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 55 % proficient or above (45% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 91% proficient or above (73% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 79% proficient or above (50% district average) **Third grade reading:** 86% proficient or above (76% district average) **Seventh grade reading:** 85% proficient or above (66% district average) **Seventh grade writing:** 72% proficient or above (50% district average)
Volunteer Hours Contributed	16,948 total 120.9% of staff hours	36,318 91% of staff hours
Attendance Rate		96.1% (Poudre School District's average is 95.4%)
Discipline Percentage of second referrals	2.9%	1.8%
Re-Enrollment Rate	76%	85%

PUEBLO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Sponsoring District: Pueblo School District 60

Location:	Pueblo (urban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	17.6
Enrollment:	361	**Percent Minority:**	53.5%
Grade Levels:	K-12		
Opening Date:	Fall 1994	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	54.6%
Waiting List:	100	**Percent Special Education:**	0%

MISSION: Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences (PSAS) believes that "the best education for the best is the best education for us all." PSAS will promote enlightened educational goals while utilizing effective and innovative teaching techniques. Students will develop to their fullest potential and the community will share a commitment to learning as a lifelong process.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: PSAS features the same core curriculum for all students, an enriched educational setting in which all students will succeed. The arts are infused throughout the curriculum and are an integrated part of students' education within the structure of a sound academic program. Instruction is based on the Paideia model including didactic, tutoring and coaching, and seminars.

GOVERNANCE: The Site Council (comprised of six parents, six students, six faculty members, a USC/District 60 Alliance representative, a Pueblo District 60 representative, a Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center representative, business representatives from the Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce and the USC Provost) make policy decisions. The Dean of the School makes day-to-day operational decisions, in consultation with the faculty.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (From charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Students will meet or exceed all exit outcomes as determined by District 60 and the state of Colorado.
- Performance level discrepancies for Hispanic students in grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 in reading/writing and math will decrease (Goal is 5% for 1998).
- Percentage of students in grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 below proficient levels will decrease (Goal is 3% for 1998).
- The school will attain or exceed an attendance rate of at least 93%.
- 98% of PSAS families will volunteer at least 18 hours/year to the school.
- Parent satisfaction with PSAS' overall performance will be maintained at 80%.
- Percentage of students reading below grade level will decrease by 5%, using the Nelson Denny Reading Test.
- Using data from students' Personal Learning Records, the total of "at-risk" students in grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 will decrease by 5% in the content areas of reading/writing and math.

MEASURE	**1996-97**	**1997-98**	**1998-99**
ACT Passport Portfolio Project Wholistic Portfolio on 4-pt scale **Scores shown for PSAS/Other ACT Test Site Schools**	**Math Lang. Science** **9th** 2.2/2.5 2.0/2.0 1.5/1.5 **10th** 2.4/2/5 2.1/2.3 1.9/1.7 **11th** 2.3/2.7 2.0/2.3 1.9/1.5	**Math Lang. Science** **Schoolwide Scores** 2.25 1.93 1.47	**Lang. Science** **9th** 1.82/1.74 1.33/1.52 **10th** 2.13/1.99 1.70/2.13 **11th** 2.20/2.14 1.78/1.80 **12th** 2.54/2/51 na
Nelson Denny Reading Test (% of students scoring at, above or below grade level)	Above grade level 34 / 45 At grade level: 7 / 15 Below grade level: 59 / 40 Scores shown are for Fall 1996/ Spring 1997.	**3rd grade Students:** Above 30 / 50 At grade level: 10 / 15 Below: 60 / 35 Scores shown are for Fall 1996/ Spring 1997. **All students** were tested in Spring 1998 only: Above grade level : 51% At grade level: 13% Below grade level: 36%	not available
ACT Plan - 10th grade Overall score on 32-point scale	English: 16.4 / 16.5 Math: 16.6 / 16.5 Reading: 17.1 / 16.0 Science: 19.3 / 17.0 Composite: 17.4 / 16.6 **Scores shown are for PSAS/National mean**	English: 18.1 Math: 16.8 Reading: 17.7 Science: 18.4 Composite: 17.8 **Scores shown are for PSAS**	not available
Terra Nova (Mean National Curve Equivalent - Total score includes reading, language, math, science and social studies) **Scores shown are for PSAS/Dist. 60**	3rd grade: 46 / 44 4th grade: 40 / 47 5th grade: 52 / 50 6th grade: 52 / 47 7th grade: 46 / 45 8th grade: 50 / 46 9th grade: 49 / 49 10th grade: 53 / 53 **Average: 48.5 / 47.8**	3rd grade: 55 / 56 4th grade: 51 / 56 5th grade: 51 / 55 6th grade: 56 / 50 7th grade: 57 / 51 8th grade: 49 / 48 9th grade: 56 / 50 10th grade: 63 / 57 **Average: 54.7 / 52.7**	3rd grade: 52 / 68 4th grade: 31 / 66 5th grade: 53 / 60 6th grade: 48 / 53 7th grade: 58 / 53 8th grade: 64 / 54 9th grade: 49 / 54 10th grade: 59 / 64 **Average: 54.3 / 59**
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) % proficient or above	**Fourth grade reading:** 26% proficient or above (44% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 3% proficient or above (19% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 66% proficient or above (53% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 37% proficient or above (30% district average) **Third grade reading:** 80% proficient or above (67% district average)	**Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 63% district 66% **4th grade** school 44% 28% district 57% 31% **7th grade** school 56% 47% district 44% 30%
District Writing Assessment (Average score - 4-pt scale) **Scores shown are for PSAS/Dist. 60**	***Grades 4 7 10*** Content 2.4/2.7 2.5/2.8 2.4/3.0 Voice 2.8/2.9 2.7/2.8 3.2/3.3 Sentence Fluency 2.5/2.6 2.5/2.4 2.8/2.8 Mode 2.5/2.9 2.7/2.5 2.5/2.8	***Grades5 7 10*** Content 2.8/3.1 3.3/3.1 3.8/3.3 Voice 2.8/2.9 3.1/3.2 4.0/3.6 Sentence Fluency 2.8/3.0 3.1/2.8 3.8/3.2 Mode 3.1/3.6 3.8/3.2 3.3/3.0	***Grades 5 7 10*** ***5-point scale*** Word choice 2.9 3.2 3.5 Voice 3.0 3.2 3.6 Sentence Fluency 3.0 3.1 3.4 Mode 3.3 3.7 3.5
Parent Involvement	16,890 hours 97% of parents volunteered	14,132 hours 97% of parents volunteered	12,362 hours 95% of parents volunteered
Attendance Rate	92.8%	93.04%	92.94%

YOUTH AND FAMILY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Pueblo School District 60

Location:	Pueblo (urban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	19.6
Enrollment:	87	**Percent Minority:**	80.5%
Grade Levels:	7-9		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	74.7%
Waiting List:	not reported	**Percent Special Education:**	27.6%

MISSION: not reported

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: not reported

GOVERNANCE: not reported

PERFORMANCE GOALS: not reported

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) % scoring proficient or above		**7th grade** **reading** **writing** school 6% 0% district 44% 30%
Not reported		
Not reported		
Not reported		

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THE CONNECT SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Pueblo School District 70

Location: Pueblo (urban)
Enrollment: 138
Grade Levels: 6-8
Opening Date: Fall 1994
Waiting List: 300

Student/Teacher Ratio: 22.0
Percent Minority: 12.0%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 0%
Percent Special Education: 5.9%

MISSION: The purpose of this school is to offer the finest academic program possible that will provide for increased learning opportunities for all students in an environment devised to meet the unique needs of each student by providing opportunities consistent with the learning styles; to improve pupil learning by creating a school with high and rigorous standards for pupil performance; to encourage and allow the most effective and innovative teaching methods in an environment where each student is truly known; to provide teachers with the opportunity, responsibility and accountability for the management and control of the total school curriculum and environment; to produce a flexible set of learning outcomes measured with different and authentic forms of assessments; to provide students and parents with an educational opportunity to the highest quality; and to foster student, parent, and community involvement through the use of community resources and partnerships.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Connect emphasizes reduced class size, increased time spent on core subjects, connecting the community as classroom, and focusing resources on instruction. Connect uses a proven curriculum and adds a hands-on instructional approach and unique "city school" resources.

GOVERNANCE: The Governing Board, comprised of three parents, one student, one administrator and one community member, makes policy decisions in consultation with staff. The administrator and staff make day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- 90% of students will perform at or above grade level in all content areas using the district's standardized testing program.
- 85% of continuously enrolled students will achieve at 85% or above in mathematics, reading and language.
- 100% of students performing below grade level will show at least 9 months academic growth.
- 100% of students will receive a grade of C or better in exhibitions and in the Rite of Passage Exam on the first attempt.
- 100% of students will use technology to increase personal productivity, will be able to use various multimedia programs to assemble and present information, and will be able to use telecommunications to access information.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Terra Nova National percentile rank	6th 7th 8th *District Avg.* Reading 69 68 76 *58* Lang. 67 67 74 *53* Math 79 70 78 *54* Science 79 69 71 *57* Soc Studies 72 65 68 *78* Total 73 69 78 *55*	6th 7th 8th Reading 78 77 76 Lang. 87 80 74 Math 88 80 81 Science 89 75 84 Soc Studies 78 72 80 Total 86 79 79 95% of students score at or above grade level. Scores are the highest for any school in Pueblo District 60 or 70.	6th 7th 8th Reading 78 83 77 Lang. 79 76 79 Math 85 92 86 Science 79 87 83 Soc Studies 79 88 83
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)			**7th grade reading:** 61% proficient or above (60% district average) **7th grade writing:** 69% proficient or above (50% district average)
Student Exhibitions % of students who achieved a "C" or better	100%	100%	100%
Exit Exams (Rite of Passage) % of students who achieved a grade of "C" or better on their first attempt	100%	100%	Grade 8 - 94%
Percentage of students below grade level who improved at least one grade level.	100%	100%	100%
Parent Attendance at School Functions	95% (100% participation in fall conferences)	95% (100% participation in fall conferences)	94%
Re-enrollment Rate	95%	98%	96%
Attendance Rate	97%	97%	97%

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SWALLOWS CHARTER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Pueblo School District 70

Location:	Pueblo (rural)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	14.8
Enrollment:	125	**Percent Minority:**	17.4%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1996	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0%
Waiting List:	158	**Percent Special Education:**	1.6%

MISSION: The mission of Swallows Academy is to help guide students in the development of their character and academic potential through academically rigorous, content-rich educational programs built around a spirit of community.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Swallows Charter Academy operates an academically challenging education program using the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. The school emphasizes a "back to basics" philosophy, with high academic standards, small class size and a strict discipline code.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors, comprised of three parents and two community members, set policy for the school. The Director and Assistant Director make day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter application and school improvement plans):

- Attendance: The Academy will achieve an attendance rate meeting or exceeding that of the average middle school within the District. Specifically, SCA will strive to achieve an average daily attendance of 95% or higher.
- Stable Enrollment: The Academy will strive for a voluntary re-enrollment rate of 95% of the eligible student population in years two through five of the Charter.
- Community Involvement: The Academy has set a goal of parental and community involvement equal to 10% or more of the total teaching hours budgeted each year.
- Class Size: Maximum enrollment allowed in any class will be 22 students.
- Grade Level Advance: 90% of students continuously enrolled in the school will have the necessary skills/competencies to advance to the next school level.
- Standardized Tests: 80% of our students will perform at or above grade level as measured by standardized testing.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) National percentile rank 50% is the national average Scores shown are for fall/spring of each academic year	**Grade** 6 7 8 Reading 65/68 68/75 48/61 Math 57/70 57/72 45/57 Language 59/53 57/66 36/58 Science 63/73 62/60 47/58 Social Science 68/66 62/70 36/60	**Grade** 6 7 8 Reading 54/62 71/74 68/60 Math 69/83 69/84 68/76 Language 55/71 59/68 65/62 Science 64/70 71/74 62/78 Social Science 61/64 65/76 68/70	**Grade** 4 5 6 7 8 Reading 60/81 62/77 55/67 59/72 69/73 Math 55/83 54/85 70/86 68/87 76/85 Language 60/76 66/76 60/71 54/80 64/74 Science 67/84 74/78 61/76 69/81 71/79 Social Science 72/84 64/77 66/75 54/66 74/74
Terra Nova National percentile rank Scores shown are for Swallows/District 70	**Grade 8** Reading 58 / 58 Math 47 / 57 Language 58 / 56 Science 56 / 62 Social Science 55 / 58	**Grade 8** Reading 62 / 62 Math 77 /63 Language 56 / 59 Science 69 / 64 Social Science 71 / 61	**Grade** 5 8 Reading 77 / 72 64/67 Math 83 / 66 73/63 Language 80 / 66 83/68 Science 79 / 69 78/68 Social Science 80 / 70 72/64
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) % scoring proficient or above			**Reading Writing** **4th grade** school 80% 55% district 66% 38% **7th grade** school 61% 72% district 60% 50%
Attendance Rate	92%	95%	Elementary - 95.45% Middle - 94.86% Total - 95.16%
Re-Enrollment Rate	71%	84%	77% (enrollment dropped due to elimination of transportation services)
Parent Attendance at Parent/Teacher Conferences	92%	100%	100%

ASPEN/CARBONDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Roaring Fork School District

Location: Woody Creek and Carbondale (rural)
Enrollment: 190
Grade Levels: K-8
Opening Date: Fall 1996
Waiting List: 70 - Cardondale
70 - Aspen

Student/Teacher Ratio: 16.3
Percent Minority: 3.7%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 0%
Percent Special Education: 2.1%

MISSION: To help our students attain a strong academic foundation, interactive social skills and a commitment to personal and community responsibility. We strive to nurture, educate and graduate confident, creative and competent students. The school's focus is on integrated and experiential learning that combines teacher-led instruction with abundant opportunities for children to initiate and complete their own projects. Our students become and remain curious, independent and self-directed learners. They learn to take responsibility for their own education.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school offers integrated and experiential learning that combines teacher-led instruction with project-based learning driven by student interest. Students establish individual learning goals each year and assess themselves through portfolios. The curriculum is project-based. The projects are mapped to the curriculum and aligned with standards and assessments. Students demonstrate skills and knowledge gained by creating a project which they present in learning centers. The school operates two campuses, one in Woody Creek and one in Carbondale. The Carbondale campus serves a K-7 population.

GOVERNANCE: The school is operated by COMPASS. The COMPASS board is comprised of three parents, one teacher, and two community members. The board, in conjunction with a school-based council (comprised of four parents, two staff members, two non-voting students and two administrators), sets policy for the school. The Administration makes day-to-day operating decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Attain an overall student attendance average of at least 90%.
- Teachers will incorporate state and district content standards in their curriculum, as evidenced by individual teacher portfolios, the school portfolio, and student portfolios of projects.
- Graduation rate of 100%. All graduates will leave school prepared for high school.

MEASURE	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Student Portfolios Assessment focuses on artifacts that students can present to teachers, parents and others, demonstrating competency in reading, writing, speaking and listening.	100% of students have portfolios	100% of students have portfolios. Aspen Community School staff report "74% progress toward a thorough assessment of each student and their progress."	100% of students have portfolios. Aspen Community School staff report "85% progress toward a thorough assessment of each student and their progress." Students incorporate standards and benchmarks documents in portfolios.
Graduation Rate	100%	100%	100%
Roaring Fork District Writing Assessment Using 6-Trait Writing Program Scores reflect a 5-point scale		***Grade* 4 8** Ideas/Content 2.58 3.18 Originality 2.5 3.09 Voice 2.9 3.36 Sentence Fluency 2.6 3.55 Mechanics 2.0 3.36	not available from district until January 2000
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	results not reported because fewer than 16 fourth grade students took the test	**3rd Grade Reading:** 82% proficient or above (74% district average) Results are not reported for 4th grade reading and writing because fewer than 16 students took the test.	**4th Grade Reading:** 65% proficient or above (63% district average) **4th Grade Writing:** 10% proficient or above (23% district average) **3rd Grade Reading:** 77% proficient or above (69 % district average)
Attendance Rate	91%	90%	94%

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TWIN PEAKS CHARTER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: St. Vrain School District

Location:	Longmont (suburban)	**Student/Teacher Ratio:**	31.4
Enrollment:	479	**Percent Minority:**	8.8%
Grade Levels:	K-8		
Opening Date:	Fall 1997	**Percent Free/Reduced Lunch:**	0.4%
Waiting List:	193	**Percent Special Education:**	1.9%

MISSION: Twin Peaks Charter Academy's mission is "to guide students in the development of their character and full scholastic potential through academically rigorous, content-rich educational programs. In so doing, we help to prepare students to become responsible, contributing citizens, able to compete in a global marketplace of ideas, goods and services."

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The school had adopted the *Core Knowledge* curriculum as the basis for its educational programs because it is specific, rigorous and sequential. The academic program includes: Reading: *Open Court* (1-6), *EPS Phonetic Readers* (K), Core Knowledge literature, ability grouped instruction; Language Arts: *Open Court* (1-6), *Steck-Vaugn Spelling* (1-7), *HBJ Language* (2-5), *Warriner's Grammar* (6-8), *Saxon Phonics* (K-3), *EPS Vocabulary from Classical Roots* (6-8); *Glencoe Literature Series* (6-8), *Write Source 2000* (1-8), *Zaner Bloser Penmanship* (K-8) *ILS/Sing, Spell, Read, and Write Readers* (1-2), *EPS Reading Comprehension, Modern Curr Press Readers* (K-1); Math: Ability grouped instruction, *Saxon Math* (K-8; through Albegra 2); Science: Core Knowledge topics, *Silver-Burdett Discovery Works* (3-5); *Prentice Hall* (6-8); Social Studies: Core Knowledge topics, *EPS* (2-3), *Story of US and Western Civilization, Adventures in Time and Place, McMillan/McGraw Hill* (4-5), *Prentice Hall and Glencoe, Holt Reinhart & Winston* (6-8). Curriculum extensions include computer, art, music, physical education and foreign language (Spanish for grades 1-5, 7-8; Latin required for grade 6). Teachers strive to integrate curriculum and instruction across disciplines by implementing a year long scope and sequence for each grant. Homework assignments are a daily routine. Multiple assessments are used to determine the success of past instruction and define the nature of future instruction. Team teaching and vertical teaming encourage shared academic expectations within and between grade levels and promote a comprehensive and consistent educational experience.

GOVERNANCE: The Board of Directors is comprised of seven parents. Two community members serve in a non-voting capacity. The board is responsible for determining the school policies. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- Student scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) will increase by 12 percentile points the initial year of operation.
- TPCA will maintain or improve an average daily attendance rate of 95%.
- TPCA will enroll 90% of its student each academic year.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) Composite Scores National percentile rank 50 is average score	1st grade 51 / 82 2nd grade 52 / 66 3rd grade 61 / 87 4th grade 56 / 84 5th grade 66 / 86 6th grade 57 / 82 7th grade 60 / 86 Scores shown are fall 1997 / spring 1998	1st grade 91 2nd grade 87 3rd grade 83 4th grade 80 5th grade 86 6th grade 87 7th grade 82 8th grade 90 Scores shown are spring 1999
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) % scoring proficient or above		**Reading Writing** **3rd grade** school 81% district 75% **4th grade** school 85% 65% district 66% 41% **7th grade** school 56% 58% district 59% 43%
Terra Nova National Percentile Rank Tests are administered in spring of the academic year. Scores in parentheses ( ) are for St. Vrain School District	**Grade 3 6** Reading 71 (66) 69 (61) Language 62 (64) 83 (61) Math 67 (60) 70 (58) Total 70 (66) 79 (62)	**Grade 3 6** Reading 68 (67) 79 (62) Language 58 (64) 78 (63) Math 62 (63) 79 (60) Total 70 (67) 84 (62)
Attendance Rate		95%
Re-Enrollment Rate	88%	89%

FRONTIER ACADEMY

Sponsoring District: Weld County School District 6

Location: Greeley (suburban)
Enrollment: 366
Grade Levels: K-6
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: 326

Student/Teacher Ratio: 21.1
Percent Minority: 17.2%

Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 27.0%
Percent Special Education: 7.7%

MISSION: Frontier Academy seeks to provide all children, having a variety of learning and communication styles, the opportunity to achieve high and common academic expectations. Consistency and direction throughout the grade levels will be made possible by using only research-based, field-tested and learner-verified instructional programs. Children shall have the opportunity to acquire a foundation of knowledge and character development in the early grades and will continue through 12th grade in a planned progression of specific academically rigorous, content-rich, proven and effective educational programs. Frontier Academy reflects the dedication and commitment to building a foundation of knowledge for cultural literacy, academic excellence and achievement.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The Academy uses an integrated curriculum that combines: the *Core Knowledge Sequence* supplemented by the *Baltimore Curriculum Project*, *SRA Direct Instruction* for language arts, spelling, reasoning and writing, *Saxon Math* program and *Wild Goose Science Program*. This provides a content-rich, high expectation, back-to-basics learning environment. The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a sequential program of specific grade-by-grade topics for core subjects. The educational program is designed to support and exceed state and district standards. Through intentional direct instruction and a proven reading/reasoning/writing program, the Academy is committed to advancing all students towards proficiency on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

GOVERNANCE: The Executive Committee is comprised of seven parents and one teacher. The Executive Committee is responsible for determining the school policies. The Headmaster is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The Academy will implement the *Core Knowledge Sequence* in grades K-8.
- The Academy will maintain full enrollment and a waitlist for all grades.
- Attendance at the Academy will meet or exceed 96% until transportation is made available.
- Student performance will met or exceed district and state performance standards in all core subjects.
- The Academy will teach character development in all grade levels.
- The Academy will provide instruction for all students with attention to their individual needs to promote mastery of all core subjects.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS Scores shown are grade level equivalent.	GLE Kindergarten .8 1st grade 1.3 2nd grade 2.2 3rd grade 2.8 4th grade 4.3 5th grade 4.8 Fall 1997 baseline	GLE K -1st grade 1.8 1st - 2nd grade 2.0 2nd - 3rd grade 3.1 3rd - 4th grade 4.1 4th- 5th grade 5.4 5th -6th grade 6.1 Fall 1998. Scores are for same cohort of students as they advanced to the next year of school
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)	**Fourth grade reading:** 58% proficient or above (44% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 44% proficient or above (24% district average) **Third grade reading:** 52% proficient or above (52% district average)	**Fourth grade reading:** 58% proficient or above (51% district average) **Fourth grade writing** 30% proficient or above (29% district average) **Third grade reading:** 62% proficient or above (52% district average)
Attendance Rate		96%

UNION COLONY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sponsoring District: Weld County School District 6

Location: Greeley (suburban)
Enrollment: 192
Grade Levels: 8-12
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: 0

Student/Teacher Ratio: 21.3
Percent Minority: 17.2%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 6.3%
Percent Special Education: 8.3%

MISSION: Union Colony Charter School involves students in educational experiences that prepare them to excel in college or other post-secondary educational endeavors. To accomplish this mission, Union Colony provides:

- an interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge among core subject areas, including fine arts, international languages, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies;
- a rigorous and challenging approach to thinking and learning;
- a strong focus on the processes and products of problem solving;
- an environment which fosters connections with teachers, other students and the community by limiting the size of the student body
- more continuity for students with a grade eight through twelve structure.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The program supports student success in college or other post-secondary educational endeavors by implementing dynamic curricula that integrate appropriate disciplines to teach learning processes and problem solving skills. Content knowledge is supported by requiring all students to take four years of core subject area classes in grades eight through eleven, and apply that content to solve applied problems through an interdisciplinary approach. Elective courses in the core subject areas are offered for students to expand their skills and knowledge or to prepare for Advanced Placement or college classes their senior year. The school emphasizes the organizational and study skills necessary for success in a college environment. Every senior is required to complete a minimum of two Advanced Placement courses or comparable college courses. In addition, as a graduation requirement, each senior is required to research, write and present a thesis based on a problem statement designed during the second semester of his/her junior year. The students work with staff advisors to develop research committees who will evaluate the theses on organization, topic development, presentation, writing skills and content knowledge.

GOVERNANCE: The Faculty Council is comprised of 12 teachers. One parent, one student and one classified employee serve on the council in a non-voting capacity. The Faculty Council is responsible for determining the school policies. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- To demonstrate improvement of overall student achievement as measured by district-wide standards on mathematics, reading and writing assessments and by UCCS core content standards.
- To achieve and maintain the district and statewide attendance rate goals.
- To achieve and maintain the district and statewide graduation rate goals.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Weld School District 6 Assessment Results % of students scoring at or above standard Scores shown in parentheses ( ) are for Weld School District 6	**Grade 9** Reading: Information Selection 66% (67%) Reading: Story Selection 83% (77%) Math: 62% (56%) Writing: Content 96% (93%) Writing: Mechanics 87% (75%)	**Grade 9** Reading: Information Selection 72% (61%) Reading: Story Selection 89% (75%) Math: 69% (56%) Writing: Content** 44% (41) Writing: Mechanics 29% (24)
Attendance Rate		93.4%
Graduation Rate		100%

** The performance levels for this district writing assessment were raised substantially in 1998-99, accounting for the dramatic change in results from the prior year, at both the school and district level. Had the performance levels used in the 1997-98 school year been applied in 1998-99, the percentage of students scoring above the standard would have been 99% in Content and 85% Mechanics.

CROWN POINTE ACADEMY OF WESTMINSTER

Sponsoring District: Westminster School District 50

Location: Westminster (suburban)
Enrollment: 176
Grade Levels: K-6
Opening Date: Fall 1997
Waiting List: 170

Student/Teacher Ratio: 25
Percent Minority: 35.8%
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 0%
Percent Special Education: 2.3%

MISSION: The mission of Crown Pointe Academy Charter School is to encourage the acquisition of knowledge, engage the mind, stimulate creativity and curiosity, and develop an understanding of the world in all student. All students will be encouraged to strive for knowledge in order to maximize their potential. The school will offer a structured, challenging curriculum, encourage strong parental involvement and be committed to teaching each child as a unique individual. Character values including respect, responsibility, honesty and kindness will be strongly encouraged.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: The academic program is driven by the *Core Knowledge Sequence* edited by Dr. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., which comprises as least 50% of the instructional time. The Core Knowledge curriculum is supplemented for all grades with *Open Court Reading, Saxon Mathematics, Accelerated Reader, Shurley Grammar, Steckvon Grammar, Zaner-Bloser Handwriting*, Spanish, music, art, physical education and library programs. The school provides individualized instruction using low student-to-teacher ratios, various methods of delivery to accommodate learning styles and various teaching techniques. The school offers an after-school remedial and enrichment program.

GOVERNANCE: The Academy Council is comprised of five parents. The school director serves as a non-voting member of the council. The council sets policy for the school. The director makes day-to-day operational decisions.

PERFORMANCE GOALS (from charter and annual school improvement plans):

- The school will implement a rigorous, challenging and integrated curriculum using the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.
- The school will grow each child a minimum of one grade level per year in each subject.
- The school will maintain a strong staff through a competitive compensation package, a strong professional development program and a strongly supportive environment.
- The school will maintain stability by retaining a growing waiting list and expanding to the 8th grade.
- The school will develop a strong parental community utilizing the parental contract and instituting a leadership development program.

MEASURE	1997-98	1998-99
Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) % scoring proficient or above	Reading Writing **3rd grade** school 60% district 53% **4th grade** school 46% 21% district 41% 27%	Reading Writing **3rd grade** school 92% district 58% **4th grade** school 79% 58% district 39% 20%
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) National percentile rank Test was administered in spring of the academic year shown	K 1 2 3 4 5 Reading 44 85 69 50 48 76 Language 36 83 78 58 42 80 Math 38 46 73 56 43 64 Science na 35 75 47 45 69 Social Studies na 57 83 42 46 65 Total 45 79 76 58 45 75	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 Reading 51 87 80 79 61 76 76 Language 69 88 86 77 63 68 83 Math 57 67 80 64 64 73 82 Science na 62 72 78 56 70 69 Social Studies na 63 80 65 54 76 68 Total 64 83 88 77 64 75 79
STAR National Percentile Rank Test was administered in spring of the academic year shown	1st grade 70% 2nd grade 69% 3rd grade 57% 4th grade 43% 5th grade 76%	1st grade 79% 2nd grade 71% 3rd grade 74% 4th grade 49% 5th grade 62% 6th grade 68%
Report Card Grades 1st and 2nd: % below Satisfactory 3rd - 6th grades: % below "C"	Not tracked	1 2 3 4 5 6 R[illegible]ding 12 0 0 0 0 4 Language - 5 8 0 10 20 Math 4 5 8 4 17 0 Science - 5 4 0 4 4 Social Studies - 9 0 0 4 8
Attendance Rate	95%	96%
Parent Overall Satisfaction	94%	87%

Conclusions Regarding Student and School Performance in Colorado Charter Schools

The diversity of the schools in this evaluation study make comparative analyses of their performance problematic. However, some type of overall conclusion about the schools' comparative progress furthers the purposes of this evaluation. To generate such a conclusion, this study considered performance data related to all five of the measures just described in the context of the schools' own performance goals, the achievement levels of the authorizing districts and the population served by the schools. By its nature, this process is somewhat subjective; it does not offer the precision of a mathematical computation. Moreover, this judgement rests solely on a paper review of the data reported by the schools together with data regularly maintained by the Colorado Department of Education, including the schools' performance level on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) assessments. The evaluation not involve site visits to the charter schools or the administration of any independent assessments.

As the new state accreditation law[46] is implemented, it will provide a common set of objective criteria by which to assess the performance of the charter schools on a comparative basis. For the 1998-99 school year covered by this study, however, the schools were not required to maintain data on the accreditation indicators and the only performance benchmarks available were the goals set by the schools themselves.

On the basis of this limited review, the study offers these observations about charter school performance for the 1998-99 school years:

Seventeen schools in the study (33%) provided data that indicated they were exceeding the expectations defined for their performance:

- Classical Academy (Academy School District 20)
- Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge (Canon City School District)
- Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District)
- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Platte River Academy Charter (Douglas County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Elementary (Jefferson County School District)
- Jefferson Academy Junior High School (Jefferson County School District)
- Lewis Palmer Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)
- Liberty Charter School (Poudre School District)
- Swallows Academy (Pueblo School District 70)
- Crown Pointe Charter School (Westminster School District 50)

Twenty six schools (51%) provided data that generally indicated they were meeting expectations defined for their performance:

- Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 School District)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 School District)
- Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers, Strasburg and Deer Creek School Districts)
- Roosevelt Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)
- Colorado Visionary Academy (Douglas County School District)
- DSC Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Eagle Charter School (Eagle County School District)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)
- Community of Learners Charter School (Durango School District 9-R)
- EXCEL School (Durango School District 9-R)
- Collegiate Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Community Involved Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Montessori Peaks Charter School (Jefferson County School District)
- Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District)
- Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortex School District)
- Lake George - Guffey Charter School (Park School District)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60)
- Connect Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)
- Aspen - Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District)
- Twin Peaks Charter School (St. Vrain School District)
- Frontier Academy Charter School (Weld School District 6)
- Union Colony Charter School (Weld School District 6)

Eight schools (16%) did not provide sufficient data to indicate whether they were meeting the expectations defined for their performance, including three schools that did not provide any data for this evaluation study. This is not to say necessarily that these schools are not performing according to the terms of their charter contracts; but that the schools have not produced data for this evaluation study that demonstrates such performance:

- Boulder Preparatory Academy (Boulder Valley School District)
- CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) - did not report
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- GLOBE (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools) - did not report
- Magnet School of the Deaf (Jefferson County School District)
- Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed School District)
- Youth and Family Academy (Pueblo School District 60) - did not report

Core Knowledge Cohort: Of the 22 Core Knowledge charter schools included in this study, 14 of the schools exceeded the expectations defined for their performance (representing 14 of the 17 schools in that category). The remaining eight generally met expectations defined for their performance (representing eight of the 25 schools in that category).

Paideia Cohort: Of the three Paideia charter schools in this study, two generally met the expectations defined for their performance (representing two of the 17 schools in that category). The third school did not report sufficient data to indicate whether it had met performance expectations (representing one of the eight schools in that category).

PART X- WAIVERS

The Waiver Process and Its Use by Charter Schools

This section of the report looks at the pattern of waiver requests made by charter schools. It further explores whether the existing waiver mechanism is adequate to support the intent and purpose of the Colorado Charter Schools Act.

The Colorado charter school law does not provide an automatic exemption – often referred to as a "superwaiver" -- from most state laws or regulations. Instead, the law extends to charter schools the operation of the same waiver provision that has been available to every public school district in Colorado since 1989.

This provision[47] allows the state board of education to waive education laws (Title 22), and the rules and regulations promulgated under those laws, subject to standards providing for educational achievement and enhancement of educational opportunity. The waiver application must be made by the board of education of the requesting school district and reflect the concurrence of: (1) a majority of the appropriate accountability committee, (2) a majority of the affected certificated administrators, and (3) a majority of the teachers in the affected school or district. This process applies whether an individual school or a school district is seeking the waiver.

The Colorado Charter Schools Act requires that the contract between a charter school and a local board of education include all requests for waivers. These requests are jointly made by the local board of education and the governing body of the charter school to the state board.[48] Waivers made in connection with charter school applications are issued for a period equal to the term of the charter, subject to review every two years. Charter schools may seek renewal of the waiver for subsequent terms of their charter under the same terms and conditions described above.

The charter application process normally precedes the opening of the school. Therefore, at the time a charter school applies for waivers, the school has no teachers, administrators or accountability committee members to make the concurrences required in the waiver statute. However, the state board has granted waivers to charter schools under these conditions, concluding that the intent of the statute was met. Charter schools are schools of choice for teachers and administrators as well as students. Educators who choose to work at a particular charter school therefore have notice of the waivers in effect at the school at the time they accept employment.

Forty-nine of the 51 charter schools in this study (96%) sought at least one waiver. Forty-eight of the schools (94%) pursued multiple waivers. There is a definite pattern of waiver requests among the charter schools, despite the range of educational programs they offered. The follow section describes the statues waived in order of the number of charter schools in this study that sought the waiver.

1. TEACHER EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION AND DISMISSAL ACT

This law, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-101 et seq, contains numerous provisions that define the nature of the employment relationship between teachers and their employers. The law:

- requires all teachers to hold a teacher's certificate;
- requires all employment contracts to be in writing and to contain specific damage provisions;
- contains requirements regarding the transfer of teachers;
- prohibits teachers to receive moneys from the sale of books, musical instruments, school supplies or other materials;
- provides for the exchange of teachers with a school district in this state or in another state or with a foreign government.
- sets specific requirements :or probationary teachers and the renewal and non-renewal of their contracts;
- sets forth the grounds and a detailed administrative procedure for the dismissal of non-probationary teachers;
- requires districts to adopt a salary schedule, salary policy or a combined salary schedule and policy; and
- requires those districts that adopt a salary schedule to place teachers on the salary schedule at a level at least commensurate with (but not limited to) the teacher's education, prior experience and experience in the district.

Forty-five of the 51 schools in the study (88%) received a waiver of some or all provisions of this Act.

2. CERTIFICATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION ACT

This Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-9-106, establishes the duties and requirements of school districts regarding the evaluation of certificated personnel, the district's reporting requirements to the State Board and the minimum information required in the district's written evaluation system.

Forty four of the 51 charter schools (86%) in the study received a waiver from the operation of this statute or enumerated subparts of the statute.

3. EMPLOYMENT AND AUTHORITY OF PRINCIPALS

Section 22-32-126, Colo. Rev. Stat., provides for the employment of principals, describes their role and requires that principals hold a Type D administrative certificate.

Forty three of 51 schools (84%) in the study received a waiver of this law.

4. SPECIFIC POWERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110 lists the specific powers of local boards of education, including the power to

- employ teachers' aides and other non-certificated personnel;
- terminate employment of personnel;
- procure life, health or accident insurance;

- adopt policies related to in-service training and official conduct of teachers; and
- accept gifts, donations and grants.

Thirty four schools (67%) in the study received waivers of specific subsections in this statute.

5. SPECIFIC DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In Section 22-32-109, Colo. Rev. Stat., the law enumerates specific duties of elected boards of education, including the power to

- to adopt policies and prescribe rules necessary and proper for the efficient administration of the affairs of the district,
- to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of tobacco products on school property,
- maintain minutes of proceedings,
- bond staff,
- keep financial records of the school district applying recognized principles of government accounting,
- publish a statement of the financial condition of the district,
- adopt a school calendar,
- set hours for parent-teacher conferences,
- prescribe textbooks and curriculum,
- adopt conduct and discipline codes,
- adopt procedures to follow in stances of assault on teachers or other school employees, and
- provide training to teachers designed to assist teachers in recognizing child abuse or neglect.

Twenty-eight of the 51 schools (55%) in the study received waivers of specific subsections of this statute.

6. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

The Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-104(4) requires local boards to adopt policies setting forth the district's attendance requirements. The policy must provide for excused absences.

Fourteen of the 51 schools (27%) received a waiver of specified sections of the compulsory school attendance law.

7. SUSPENSIONS

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-105 sets out the requirements for suspension and expulsion of students.

Ten of the 51 schools (20%) received a waiver or some of all of the provisions of this statute.

8. CONDUCT DISCIPLINE CODES

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110 (2.3) gives local boards of education that power to adopt student conduct and discipline codes.

Nine of 51 schools (18%) received a waiver of this statute.

9. BOARD OF EDUCATION - SPECIFIC DUTIES REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.7 sets out specific duties that local boards of education must follow in employing personnel.

Seven of the 51 charter schools in this study (14%) received a waiver of this statute.

10. BOARD OF EDUCATION - SPECIFIC DUTIES REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.9 sets out specific duties that local boards of education must follow in requiring certificated personnel to submit fingerprints if the school district has cause to believe that the personnel have been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor, not including traffic infractions, subsequent to their employment with the district.

Seven of the 51 charter schools in this study (14%) received a waiver of this statute.

11. KINDERGARTEN

The Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 32-32-119, states that a board of education may establish and maintain kindergartens for the instruction of children one year prior to their admission to the first grade.

Seven of the 51 charter schools in this study (14%) received a waiver of this statute.

12. FOOD SERVICES

Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-120 relates to the authority of a local board of education to establish, maintain, equip and operate a food-service facility.

Four of the 51 charter schools (8%) received a waiver of this statute.

M. COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT

Three of the 51 charter schools (6%) received a waiver of subsections of the Colorado Charter Schools Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104 and 112(1), relating to the location of a charter schools and the financing of charter schools, respectively.

Table 6 provides an overview of the frequency and distribution of the waivers requested by the charter schools in this study.

Possible Explanations For The Expansive Use Of Waivers By Charter Schools

The stated purpose of the waiver statute is to advance educational achievement and accountability. Prior to the advent of charter schools in Colorado, districts invoked the waiver statute sparingly and primarily for minor issues. In the four years prior to the passage of The Charter Schools Act, the period from 1989 to 1993, the state board granted twenty waivers. Between 1994 and 1997, in contrast, charter schools sought and received a total of 96 waivers. During that same period (1994 to1997), the number of waiver requests granted to public school districts remained a modest 18.

There are several explanations for the expansive use of the waiver law by charter schools. The first explanation is a practical one: as schools of choice, it is easier for charter schools to obtain the concurrences required by the waiver statute.

Another explanation is that the budget constraints facing charter schools force them to do business in a different way. The Colorado Charter Schools Act provides no start-up funds for new charter schools and requires that (at least for the period covered by this study) charter schools receive a minimum of 80% of per pupil operating revenue. Some charter schools have successfully negotiated a higher rate of funding, others have not. Moreover, most schools must pay some portion of their operating revenues to rent facilities because they do not have access to school district facilities or to capital construction funds. Finally, many of the charter schools seek to maintain lower pupil/teacher ratios than conventional public schools. This practice has major fiscal implications. Given these budget parameters, the ability to structure employee compensation outside the district's normal salary schedule is essential to the viability of many charter schools.

A third explanation is philosophical. In order to implement a distinctive educational program, the great majority of charter schools have attempted to establish considerable autonomy from their authorizing districts in matters related to personnel, governance and educational approach (e.g. testing, curriculum, instruction, discipline code, professional development activities). In their waiver petitions, many charter school applicants stated their belief that existing school structures and approaches are not serving students well. They cited system issues that they perceive exist in conventional public schools -- including the alienation of parents, non-responsiveness to consumer needs, highly managed parent and community involvement in decision-making, frustration with collective bargaining and the inflexible Master Agreements produced through this process, and lack of flexibility regarding salary schedules and teacher evaluations -- that they intend to avoid or overcome.

Table 6: Overview of Statutes Waived by Charter Schools, Schools Opened in Fall 1993 and Fall 1994

STATUTE WAIVED	Academy of Charter Schools	Stargate	Academy	Core Knowledge	Comm Learn.	EXCEL	Eagle	Comm Involv	Jefferson Acad.	Collegiate	Battle Rock	Pueblo Arts/ Sci	Connect
22-9-101 - Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22-30.5-104 - Colorado Charter Schools Act							X						
22-32-109 - Local Board Duties	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
22-32-109.7 - Selection of Personnel													
22-32 109.8-9 - Fingerprinting													
22-32-110(1) - Local Board Powers	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
22-32-110(2, 3) Conduct/Discipline Codes													
22-32-119 - Kindergarten													
22-32-120 - Food Services													
22-32-126 - Employment and Authority of Principals	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
22-33-104(4) - Compulsory School Attendance	X					X							
22-33-105 - Suspensions													
22-63-101 -Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

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Table 6 (Cont.): Overview of Statutes Waived by Charter Schools, Schools Opened in Fall 1995

STATUTE WAIVED	Cherry Creek Academy	Renaissance	P.S. 1	Community Prep.	GLOBE	Cheyenne Mountain	Marble	Excel Academy	Crestone	Aspen Comm Carbondale
22-9-101 - Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22-30.5-104(2), 112(1) - Colorado Charter Schools Act						X				
22-32-109(1) - Local Board Duties		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
22-32-109.7 - Selection of Personnel					X		X		X	
22-32-109.8-9 - Fingerprinting					X		X		X	
22-32-110(1) - Local Board Powers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
22-32-110(2, 3) Conduct/Discipline Codes							X		X	
22-32-119 - Kindergarten									X	X
22-32-120 - Food Services				X						
22-32-126 - Employment and Authority of Principals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22-33-101 - Compulsory School Attendance			X		X				X	X
22-33-105 - Suspensions							X		X	
22-63-101 -Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Table 6 (Cont.): Overview of Statutes Waived by Charter Schools, Schools Opened in Fall 1996

STATUTE WAIVED	Summit Middle	Roosevelt Edison	Mountain View Charter	Jefferson Jr. High	Lewis Palmer	Littleton Academy	Lake George-Guffey	Swallows Academy
22-9-101 - Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
22-30.5-104(2), 112(1) - Colorado Charter Schools Act								
22-32-109 - Local Board Duties	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22-32-109.7 - Selection of Personnel			X					
22-32-109.8-9 - Fingerprinting			X					
22-32-110(1) - Local Board Powers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22-32-110(2, 3) Conduct/Discipline Codes			X					
22-32-119 - Kindergarten			X					
22-32-120 - Food Services								
22-32-126-Employment /Authority of Principals	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
22-33-104(4) - Compulsory School Attendance		X	X					
22-33-105 - Suspensions							X	
22-63-101 -Teacher Employment, Comp & Dismissal Act	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Table 6 (Cont.): Overview of Statutes Waived by Charter Schools, Schools Opened in Fall 1997

STATUTE WAIVED	Classical Academy	Pinnacle	Prarie Creeks	Boulder Prep	Horizons	CIVA Charter	Pioneer	Colorado Visionary	DSC Montessori	Platte River Academy
22-9-101 - Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act	X				X	X		X	X	X
22-30.5-104(2), 112(1) - Colorado Charter Schools Act										
22-32-109(1) - Local Board Duties	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
22-32-109.7 - Selection of Personnel										
22-32-109.8-9 - Fingerprinting										
22-32-110(1) - Local Board Powers	X		X							
22-32-110(2, 3) Conduct/Discipline Codes	X		X							
22-32-119 - Kindergarten										
22-32-120 - Food Services										X
22-32-126 - Employment and Authority of Principals	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
22-33-101 - Compulsory School Attendance			X							
22-33-105 - Suspensions			X			X				
22-63-101 -Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X

Table 6 (Cont.): Overview of Statutes Waived by Charter Schools, Schools Opened in Fall 1997

STATUTE WAIVED	Elbert County	Lincoln Academy	Magnet School of Deaf	Montessori Peaks	Liberty Common School	Youth & Family Academy	Twin Peaks	Frontier	Union Colony	Crown Pointe
22-9-101 - Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
22-30.5-104(2), 112(1) - Colorado Charter Schools Act										
22-32-109(1) - Local Board Duties					X	X	X	X		
22-32-109.7 - Selection of Personnel					X	X		X		
22-32-109.8-.9 - Fingerprinting					X	X		X		
22-32-110(1) - Local Board Powers					X	X	X	X		X
22-32-110(2, 3) Conduct/Discipline Codes						X	X	X		X
22-32-119 - Kindergarten					X		X	X		X
22-32-120 - Food Services							X			X
22-32-126 - Employment and Authority of Principals	X	X		X	X		X	X		X
22-33-101 - Compulsory School Attendance					X	X	X	X		X
22-33-105 - Suspensions					X	X	X	X		X
22-63-101 -Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X

Effectiveness of the Process Used by Charter Schools to Secure Waivers

The cumulative record suggests that the existing process for permitting charter schools to secure waivers was adequate to enable these schools to overcome statutory barriers to the successful implementation of their distinctive programs. However, the waiver application and hearing process did require an investment of time and effort on the part of both the charter schools and of CDE. (Proposed legislation to amend the Colorado Charter Schools Act by including a "super-waiver" provision has been considered by the Colorado General Assembly, but has not been enacted.)

Most of the waivers sought and granted to the Colorado charter schools in the study addressed the status and rights of adults in the schools (evaluation, compensation, governance authority) and did not directly relate to the schools' educational program. This pattern reflects the nature of the Colorado's education policy infrastructure as a local control state. Colorado does not have state textbook selection, state graduation requirements or state mandated curriculum or curriculum frameworks. If Colorado regulated these areas at a state level, as many other states do, the pattern of waiver requests made by the charter schools certainly would have been much different, and more expansive, in order for the schools to attain the desired degree of autonomy.

It is worth noting that many Colorado charter schools consciously tried to contribute leadership and innovation in the areas of governance, site-based decision making and employment policies. Central to the design and educational approach of many charter schools is a vision of parental and community engagement that was broader than common practice. Many charter schools also tried to implement accountability measures -- from shared governance to pay for performance -- that created a sense of shared responsibility for student results. These new governance models required the extensive degree of site autonomy that the waivers made possible.

PART XI - A SNAPSHOT OF FINANCIAL AND FACILITY ISSUES IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Funding

The Colorado Charter Schools Act provides that charter schools and their authorizing districts "shall agree to funding and on any services to be provided by the school district to the charter school." For the period covered by this study (the 1998-99 school year), the Act required that the funding negotiated "cannot be less than eighty percent of the district per pupil operating revenues (PPOR) multiplied by the number of pupils enrolled in the charter school." PPOR is the funding for a district that represents the financial base of support for public education in that district, divided by the district's funded pupil count, minus the minimum amount of funds required to be transferred to the capital reserve fund, the insurance fund or any other fund for the management of risk-related activities. As described in Section II of this report, the Colorado General Assembly amended the provisions of the Act related to charter school funding in 1999.

Forty seven of the 51 charter schools in this study provided information about funding. Of this total:

- 13% (six schools) received funding at a rate of 80% or less of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 25%(12 schools) received funding at a rate of 81% to 85% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 15% (seven schools) receiving funding at a rate of 86% to 91% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 9% (four schools) receiving funding at a rate of 95% to 99% of the authorizing district's PPOR.
- 38% (18 schools) receiving funding at a rate of 100% of the authorizing district's PPOR.

Purchase of Services

The Colorado Charter Schools Act allows charter schools to contract with the school district for the direct purchase of district services in addition to those included in the central administration overhead costs. The charter schools also may purchase these services from third parties. Table 7, below, shows the purchasing patterns of the charter schools in this study.

Table 7 - Percentage of Charter Schools that Purchase Services from Authorizing District or Third Parties

SERVICE PURCHASED	Purchased from 3rd party	Purchased from district as part of negotiated PPOR	Purchased from district for payment	Service Not Purchased by Charter School	Service Provided by Charter School In-House
Insurance	33%	33%	34%	0%	0%
Food Services	11%	9%	23%	55%	2%
Maintenance	55%	11%	18%	14%	2%
Legal Services	44%	30%	24%	2%	0%
Accounting Services	16%	46%	25%	11%	2%
Payroll Services	23%	50%	20%	0%	7%
Special Education Services	20%	26%	49%	0%	3%
Professional Development	46%	17%	11%	23%	2%
Transportation	11%	13%	16%	60%	0%
Student Assessment	23%	37%	29%	9%	2%

Facility Study

The 51 charter schools in this study were located in a wide variety of facilities during the 1998-99 school year, including museums, churches, warehouses, grocery stories, strip malls, modular buildings, industrial space and others. Thirty two of the 51 schools (63%) paid rent for their facilities. The remaining nineteen schools (37%) used a donated facility or a facility owned by the authorizing district.

The Colorado Department of Education released a study on charter school capital finance in January 2000. The study described the types of facilities being used by Colorado Charter Schools, assessed the quality of the facilities and discussed the financial arrangements for the use of these facilities. The study -- *Colorado Charter Schools Capital Finance Study: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future* -- is available on the CDE website – http://www.cde.state.co.us.

Federal Start-Up and Dissemination Grants

The Colorado Department of Education was awarded a $3 million grant for the 1998-99 school year from the United States Department of Education to support the development and implementation of charter schools in Colorado. The CDE used these funds to implement a competitive grant program for charter schools designed to (1) support the expansion of quality and educationally diverse charter schools throughout the state by supporting the efforts of charter school developers and organizers, and (2) to assist newly approved and operational charter schools in meeting their identified planning, start-up and implementation needs.

The RFP for the grants program listed the following priorities:

- Increasing student achievement as measured by the Colorado Student assessment Program (CSAP).
- Increasing participation of low income and at-risk students enrolled in charter schools through the ongoing development of partnerships with various community and charter advocacy organizations.
- Developing additional networking and professional development opportunities for charter school developers, operators, teachers and governing board members.
- Providing assistance to bring leased facilities up to code.
- Creating accountability systems in charter schools.
- Promoting deregulation for charter schools through waivers from inhibiting state laws, rules and regulations.

In the 1998-99 school year, CDE awarded start-up grants totaling $2,849,990 to Colorado charter schools. Grants were awarded for a three-year period, subject to annual review.

Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, the Colorado Department of Education also will award dissemination grants to charter schools on a competitive basis. These grants will focus on assisting charter schools to collaborate with each other and to share their work more broadly.

Flow-Through of Federal and State Funds by Authorizing Districts

The Charter School Expansion Act of 1998[49] requires authorizing districts to flow-through specified categories of federal dollars to the charter schools that serve students who are eligible for the categorical aid. The specified categories include Title I, Goals 2000, Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project, Vocational Education Basic Grants, Tech Prep, Class Size, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Eisenhower Professional Development, Innovative Education Program Strategies, Immigrant Education, Homeless Education, Even Start Family Literacy, Special Education preschool grants. The Colorado General Assembly amended the Colorado Charter Schools Act in 1999 to complement these provisions in federal law.[50]

The responses of charter school administrators to the 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study Questionnaire raised a concern that some authorizing districts are not in full compliance with the provisions of these laws. The data generated for this evaluation study did not support a conclusion about the extent of the districts' noncompliance nor did it suggest possible explanations for their actions. The data did indicate, however, that this issue was problematic enough to warrant follow-up on the part of the Colorado Department of Education.

PART XII - LESSONS LEARNED BY CHARTER SCHOOLS and ONGOING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

In an effort to share effective practice and the experience of veteran charter schools and with potential charter school planners and operators, the 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study Questionnaire posed questions about lessons learned and ongoing technical assistance needs. The responses submitted by the schools are discussed in the following sections.

Lessons Learned

The questionnaire asked the respondents to "identify the most significant lessons you have learned about how to structure and operate a successful charter school. Think in terms of the advice you would give to someone who is about to embark on this enterprise."

Forty two of the 51 schools covered by the scope of this evaluation study submitted responses to the questionnaire. These responses are presented below, organized by general categories and in the order of the frequency with which the participating schools mentioned a particular issue.

DEVELOPING THE CHARTER APPLICATION AND PLANNING FOR START-UP

1. "Plan, plan, plan. Then plan some more."
    - Have curriculum, handbooks, job descriptions, school policies, governance policies, salary plans, etc. in place before the school opens.
    - Try to anticipate issues that will require a policy or procedure and put those policies into place.
    - Don't underestimate the planning time or level of commitment required to complete the charter application and to prepare for opening.
    - Identify goals and follow a defined schedule for the planning process.
    - Learn from others and don't reinvent the wheel. "Research what the best have done and model it."
    - Use resources offered by the Colorado League of Charter Schools.

2. Articulate and maintain a clear mission and philosophy. Consistently apply this mission in making decisions about all aspects of the school, from curriculum to facility to instructional practices.
    - "Make sure vision of founders, board, administrators and parents is consistent."
    - Define well the most significant aspects of the school (mission, goals, educational program, governing structure, major policies) before taking it public. Be sure you are offering something a large number of parents in your area want.
    - Be and stay inspired. "Set high goals and strive towards them."

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3. Provide appropriate training and orientation including legal issues and the requirements of open meetings law for parents who will be involved in decision-making.

- Provide staff development and planning time to teachers before the school opens its doors if at all possible.
- At the secondary level, create opportunities for students to be involved in shaping the school's educational program and philosophy.

The following "lessons learned" each were identified by a single responding charter school and may be unique to that school's particular situation:

- "Keep core group planning group small at the beginning, but make sure the group is diverse."
- "Start with lower grades and move upward."
- "Make several copies of everything – bureaucratic agencies tend to lose your materials."
- "Keep a calm attitude and negotiate (with the authorizing district) from a well-informed, factual (basis)."
- "Look ahead to where the school should be in 3 - 5 years. We anticipated standards and were able to present a contemporary curriculum to the (authorizing) district."

START UP

1. Stay true to the mission defined in the charter application.

2. Plan on change and stay flexible.
   - "Don't be afraid to change things if they are not working."
   - "Structure the school's operations to provide maximum flexibility to take advantage of opportunities."
   - "Aim for continuous improvement."

3. Put teacher and administrator quality as number one.

4. Expect some transition in roles and some discomfort as the school moves from theory to operation.
   - Go slowly; don't try to do everything at once.
   - "Charter schools do not attract the faint hearted. The determined, strong-willed behavior that is needed to bring the charter school to reality can make decision-making and implementation a challenge."
   - "Organizers need to recognize that as soon as other people are involved, it's no longer your school and that the talents, knowledge, history and philosophical beliefs of the people involved will mold the school."
   - "Honor the work and ideas of people who are (currently) involved" as the school moves from theory to operation.

The following "lessons learned" each were identified by a single responding charter school and that may be unique to that school's particular situation:

- Recognize that "parents are in integral part of the school. Use them wisely."
- Try to maintain "consistency in daily operations."

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ADMINISTRATION GOVERNANCE

1. Clearly define the relative responsibilities of the governing board and school administration and staff and establish clear lines of communication between the board and the school administrator.
    - "Board shouldn't micro-manage staff."
    - "Draw distinct lines of responsibility between parents (including the governing board) and the staff."
    - "Mutual respect; clear delineation of responsibility; governing board must value educators as professionals. Likewise, school staff must recognize policy role of Governing Board."

2. Strive to maintain good working relationships with the authorizing district
    - "Establish rapport with key communicators at central administration."
    - View the charter school "as providing additional choices rather than competing."
    - Engage in open communication (with the authorizing district) through participation in district committees.

3. Strive for consistent leadership on the board and at the administrator level.
    - Include individuals who have business, legal or financial backgrounds on the governing board.
    - Communicate board activities and decisions clearly and consistently with parents.
    - Administrators and board members should be open to parents and to their concerns.
    - "Stability and continuity on the governing board is invaluable to maintain effective operations."

Each of the following lessons learned was mentioned by only one school and may be unique to the school:

- The hiring and termination of the administrator should involve input from parents and not just the governing board. "The reason CEOs turn over so frequently is because it often happens at the whim of just a few board members who have overstepped."
- Schools with an enrollment larger than 400 students should have at least two full-time administrators.
- Use a management team to assist with daily management issues and keep administrative costs down.
- Conform to the Open Meetings Act and keep detailed minutes of board meetings.
- Provide a formal structure for parental input.
- "The image that the school begins with is the image that the public holds on to, no matter the veracity or how the school changes. These public perceptions are easily made and difficult to alter."
- Employ neutral financial management services if school serves more than one district.

STAFF

1. Provide staff development and professional growth opportunities to teachers.
   - "Make sure staff development is directed to specific needs of teacher and reflect their input."

2. Hire high quality people who share the school's mission and philosophy.
   - "Make high quality staff a priority."
   - "Pay people well and expect the best."

3. Strive for retention of staff to promote consistency in the school's program.
   - "Proper compensation (of staff) reduces turnover. There is a lot of hard work that needs to be recognized."

4. Involve teachers "in the selection of instructional materials and equipment.
   - "Allow teachers to make curriculum decisions to implement board-determined philosophy, and to decide which instructional materials to purchase."

The following "lessons learned" each were identified by a single responding charter school and may be unique to that school's particular situation:

- "Schools that deal with at-risk youth should have a full-time therapist on staff who can also teach. This person is invaluable in managing discipline issue and other social problems and serves as an important resource to staff."
- "Don't tie teacher evaluation to test results."

Ongoing Technical Assistance Needs of Colorado Charter Schools

The 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Questionnaire asked respondents "what are your school's major needs for technical assistance?"

The most frequently identified issue, by an overwhelming margin, was technology. Of the 42 schools that responded to this question, 23 (55%) identified this need. Schools identified a range of technology-related challenges, including:

- Acquisition of adequate computer hardware and software,
- Internet access,
- Staff development related to the integration of technology into the curriculum and into the teaching and learning process,
- Technical support,
- Assistance in setting up effective data networks, and
- Access to other educational technology, including distance learning and the inter-district messaging system.

Fifteen schools (36%) also identified the need for specialized services or expertise, specifically:

- Legal advice - five schools;
- Financial advice, including investments, financial planning, budgeting - five schools;
- Assistance in developing written policies and procedures, including administrator evaluation and pay for performance policies - three schools;
- Grant searching and writing - two schools;
- Facilities planning - one school;
- Performance pay development -one school;
- Long range planning - one school; and
- Capital campaigning - one school.

Four schools identified technical assistance needs in the general area of assessment, although their specific needs had different points of focus:

- Assistance documenting authentic assessment practices to support alternative methods of instruction and assessment.
- Assistance documenting students "at risk," using characteristics other than those typically applied.
- Support in designing a student reporting/accounting system.

Three schools identified the need for assistance in locating a suitable, long-term facility for the school. Three schools also identified the need for support in providing high quality professional development opportunities to their professional staff. Within this category of need, individual schools mentioned leadership training and access to emerging professional networks. Another three schools identified special education needs, including specifically offering more services on-site, advice on special education law, and advice on policies and procedures.

The following technical assistance each were listed by a single school.

- Building maintenance issues.
- Issues related to the state's new accreditation system.
- "Ways of meeting state district requirements for evaluation, accountability, central office paperwork so that administrators can get about the business of leading teachers."

END NOTES

[1] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(6)

[2] Arizona has the highest percentage, with charter school students representing 3.4% of total public school enrollment. RPP International, *The State of Charter Schools Third-year Report.* (1999). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

[3] *The State of Charter Schools Third-year Report.*

[4] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-102(2).

[5] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(1) - (3).

[6] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(4)-(5).

[7] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(6).

[8] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5 106(7).

[9] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-107.

[10] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-105.

[11] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-106.

[12] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110

[13] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110(3)

[14] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110(4)

[15] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-111

[16] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(7)(b)-(c).

[17] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(4.5)(a).

[18] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-111(1)-(2).

[19] In the 1999 session the General Assembly passed and Governor Owens signed H.B. 99-113, which amended the Charter Schools Act to provide for increases in the minimum funding level for Colorado charter schools.

[20] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a)(III).

[21] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.5)(I).

[22] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.7).

[23] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.8).

[24] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(e)(3)(a)(I)-(II).

[25] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-107.5.

[26] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-108.

[27] *Board of Education School District No. 1 v. Booth*, 984 P.2d 639 (Colo. 1999).

[28] The State of Charter Schools Third Year Report. This Report covers 678 charter schools in 24 charter states, including Colorado.

[29] *The State of Charter Schools Third Year Report.*

[30] Colorado Visionary Charter Academy (Douglas County School District) also uses the Core Knowledge approach for social studies and language.

[31] Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District) also uses elements of the Core Knowledge approach.

[32] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (1999). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

[33] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (1999). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

[34] Colo. Rev. Stat. 11-30.5-104(3).

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[35] Free and reduced lunch eligibility is a way to estimate the percentage of low-income students. In 1997, a family of four with an annual income of $20,865 or less would qualify for free lunch under the federally-funded lunch program. A family of four with an annual income of $29,693 or less would quality for reduced lunch.

[36] *The State of Charter Schools Third Year Report.*

[37] *The State of Charter Schools Third Year Report.*

[38] *The State of Charter Schools Third Year Report.*

[39] Prairie Creeks Charter School (Bennett, Byers and Strasburg and Deer Trail School Districts) is governed by a board comprised of the four superintendents from the authorizing school districts. Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) is operated by the City of Colorado Springs, under the authority of the Colorado Springs City Council. Roosevelt-Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11) follows policies related to school design and program parameters set by the National Edison Project. A school-based advisory group helps set budget priorities and implement local programs related to public relations, student achievement, fund raising and school events. Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo School District 60) is governed by a Site Council comprised of six parents, six students, six faculty members, a USC/District 60 Alliance representative, a Pueblo District 60 representative, a Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center representative, business representatives from the Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce and the USC Provost.

[40] Henderson, Ann T. and Nancy Beda, eds. *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement.* Washington D.C.: Center for Law and Education. 1996.

[41] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-105.

[42] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-11-101, et seq.

[43] The Colorado Department of Education reported 1999 CSAP performance levels by the socioeconomic status of schools, using the percent of students receiving free or reduced cost lunch as used as the indicator of school SES. Results were reported at four levels of SES:
Level 1: 0-25% receiving free or reduced-cost lunch
Level 2: 26-50% receiving free to reduced-cost lunch
Level 3: 51-75 receiving free or reduced-cost lunch
Level 4: 76-100% receiving free or reduced-cost lunch.
The analysis presented in this study compared the performance of individual charter schools to the state average for all schools in the charter school's SES classification level.

[44] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-106(b), (e) and (f).

[45] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-7-205.

[46] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-11-101, et. seq.

[47] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-2-117.

[48] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-105.

[49] P.L. 105-278.

[50] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112.

Appendix

- Contact Information for Colorado Charter Schools
- Colorado Charter Schools Act
- 1998-99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Questionnaire and School Profile/Data Matrix

Charter School Contact Information

Up-to-date contact information for all Colorado charter schools, including those in this study, is available on the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us

APPENDIX 1 – THE COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT

22-30.5-101 – Short title.

This part 1 shall be known and may be cited as the "Charter Schools Act".

22-30.5-102 – Legislative declaration.

(1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) It is the obligation of all Coloradans to provide all children with schools that reflect high expectations and create conditions in all schools where these expectations can be met;

(b) Education reform is in the best interests of the state in order to strengthen the performance of elementary and secondary public school pupils, that the best education decisions are made by those who know the students best and who are responsible for implementing the decisions, and, therefore, that educators and parents have a right and a responsibility to participate in the education institutions which serve them;

(c) Different pupils learn differently and public school programs should be designed to fit the needs of individual pupils and that there are educators, citizens, and parents in Colorado who are willing and able to offer innovative programs, educational techniques, and environments but who lack a channel through which they can direct their innovative efforts.

(2) The general assembly further finds and declares that this part 1 is enacted for the following purposes:

(a) To improve pupil learning by creating schools with high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;

(b) To increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low-achieving;

(c) To encourage diverse approaches to learning and education and the use of different, proven, or innovative teaching methods;

(d) To allow the development of different and innovative forms of measuring pupil learning and achievement;

(e) To create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;

(f) To provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of education opportunities that are available within the public school system;

(g) To encourage parental and community involvement with public schools;

(g.5) To address the formation of charter schools;

(h) To hold charter schools accountable for meeting state board and school district content standards and to provide such schools with a method to change accountability systems.

(3) In authorizing charter schools, it is the intent of the general assembly to create a legitimate avenue for parents, teachers, and community members to take responsible risks and create new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating all children within the public school system. The general assembly seeks to create an atmosphere in Colorado's public school systems where research and development in developing different learning opportunities is actively pursued. As such, the provisions of this part 1 should be interpreted liberally to support the findings and goals of this section and to advance a renewed commitment by the state of Colorado to the mission, goals, and diversity of public education.

22-30.5-103 – Definitions.

(1) For purposes of this part 1:

(a) "At-risk pupil" means a pupil who, because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic, or cultural factors, is less likely to succeed in a conventional educational environment.

(b) "Local board of education" means the school district board of education.

(c) "State board" means the state board of education.

22-30.5-104 – Charter school - requirements - authority.

(1) A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, non-home-based school which operates within a public school district.

(2) A charter school shall be a public school within the school district that grants its charter and shall be accountable to the school district's local board of education for purposes of ensuring compliance with applicable laws and charter provisions and the requirement of section 15 of article IX of the state constitution. A charter school cannot apply to, or be granted a charter by, a school district unless a majority of the charter school's pupils will reside in the chartering school district or in school districts contiguous thereto.

(3) A charter school shall be subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. A charter school shall be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the school district. Enrollment must be open to any child who resides within the school district, except that no charter school shall be required to make alterations in the structure of the facility used by the charter school or to make alterations to the arrangement or function of rooms within the facility, except as may be required by state or federal law. Enrollment decisions shall be made in a nondiscriminatory manner specified by the charter school applicant in the charter school application.

(4) A charter school shall be administered and governed by a governing body in a manner agreed to by the charter school applicant and the local board of education. A charter school may organize as a nonprofit corporation pursuant to the "Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act", articles 20 to 29 of title 7, C.R.S., which shall not affect its status as a public school for any purposes under Colorado law.

(4.5)(a) In order to clarify the status of charter schools for purposes of tax-exempt financing, a charter school, as a public school, is a governmental entity. Direct leases and financial obligations of a charter school shall not constitute debt or financial obligations of the school district unless the school district specifically assumes such obligations.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 22-30.5-110 (1) to the contrary, a charter school and the local board of education may agree to extend the length of the charter beyond five years for the purpose of enhancing the terms of any lease or financial obligation.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in sections 22-20-109, 22-32-115, and 22-54-109, a charter school shall not charge tuition.

(6) Pursuant to contract, a charter school may operate free from specified school district policies and state regulations. Pursuant to

(4.5) If a local board of education revokes or does not renew a charter, the board shall state its reasons for the revocation or nonrenewal.

(5) A decision to revoke or not to renew a charter may be appealed or facilitation may be sought pursuant to the provisions of section 22-30.5-108.

22-30.5-111 – Charter schools - employee options.

(1) During the first year that a teacher employed by a school district is employed by a charter school, such teacher shall be considered to be on a one-year leave of absence from the school district. Such leave of absence shall commence on the first day of services for the charter school. Upon the request of the teacher, the one-year leave of absence shall be renewed for up to two additional one-year periods upon the mutual agreement of the teacher and the school district. At the end of three years, the relationship between the teacher and the school district shall be determined by the school district and such district shall provide notice to the teacher of the relationship.

(2) The local board of education shall determine by policy or by negotiated agreement, if one exists, the employment status of school district employees employed by the charter school who seek to return to employment with public schools in the school district.

(3) Employees of a charter school shall be members of the public employees' retirement association or the Denver public schools retirement system, whichever is applicable. The charter school and the teacher shall contribute the appropriate respective amounts as required by the funds of such association or system.

22-30.5-112 – Charter schools - financing - guidelines.

(1) For purposes of the "Public School Finance Act of 1994", article 54 of this title, pupils enrolled in a charter school shall be included in the pupil enrollment of the school district that granted its charter. The school district that granted its charter shall report to the department of education the number of pupils included in the school district's pupil enrollment that are actually enrolled in each charter school.

(2)(a)(I) As part of the charter school contract, the charter school and the school district shall agree on funding and any services to be provided by the school district to the charter school.

(II) For the 1999-2000 budget year, the charter school and the school district shall begin discussions on the contract using eighty percent of the district per pupil operating revenues.

(III) For budget year 2000-2001 and budget years thereafter, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a.3) of this subsection (2), each charter school and the authorizing school district shall negotiate funding under the contract at a minimum of ninety-five percent of the district per pupil revenues for each pupil enrolled in the charter school. The school district may choose to retain up to five percent of the district per pupil revenues for each pupil enrolled in the charter school as payment for the charter school's portion of central administrative overhead costs incurred by the school district.

(a.3) If the authorizing school district enrolls five hundred or fewer students, the charter school shall receive funding in the amount of the greater of one hundred percent of the district per pupil revenues for each pupil enrolled in the charter school minus the actual amount of the charter school's per pupil share of the central administrative overhead costs incurred by the school district, based on audited figures, or eighty-five percent of the district per pupil revenues for each pupil enrolled in the charter school.

(a.5) As used in this subsection (2):

(I) "Central administrative overhead costs" means indirect costs incurred in providing items or services listed under the heading of support services - general administration in the school district chart of accounts as specified by rule of the state board.

(II) "District per pupil revenues" means the district's total program as defined in section 22-54-103 (6) for any budget year divided by the district's funded pupil count as defined in section 22-54-103 (7) for said budget year.

(III) "Per pupil operating revenues" shall have the same meaning as provided in section 22-54-103 (9).

(a.7) For the 2000-2001 budget year and budget years thereafter, each charter school shall annually allocate the minimum per pupil dollar amount specified in section 22-54-105 (2) (b), multiplied by the number of students enrolled in the charter school, to a fund created by the charter school for capital reserve purposes, as set forth in section 22-45-103 (1) (c) and (1) (e), or solely for the management of risk-related activities, as identified in section 24-10-115, C.R.S., and article 13 of title 29, C.R.S., or among such allowable funds. Said moneys shall be used for the purposes set forth in section 22-45-103 (1) (c) and (1) (e) and may not be expended by the charter school for any other purpose.

(a.8) For the 2000-2001 budget year and budget years thereafter, the school district shall provide federally required educational services to students enrolled in charter schools on the same basis as such services are provided to students enrolled in other public schools of the school district. Each charter school shall pay an amount equal to the per pupil cost incurred by the school district in providing federally required educational services, multiplied by the number of students enrolled in the charter school. At either party's request, however, the charter school and the school district may negotiate and include in the charter contract alternate arrangements for the provision of and payment for federally required educational services.

(b) The charter school, at its discretion, may contract with the school district for the direct purchase of district services in addition to those included in central administrative overhead costs, including but not limited to food services, custodial services, maintenance, curriculum, media services, and libraries. The amount to be paid by a charter school in purchasing any district service pursuant to this paragraph (b) shall be determined by dividing the cost of providing the service for the entire school district, as specified in the school district's budget, by the number of students enrolled in the school district and multiplying said amount by the number of students enrolled in the charter school.

(b.5) The charter school may agree with the school district to pay any actual costs incurred by the school district in providing unique support services used only by the charter school.

(c)(I) For the 1999-2000 budget year, in no event shall the amount of funding negotiated pursuant to this subsection (2) be less than eighty percent of the district per pupil operating revenues multiplied by the number of pupils enrolled in the charter school.

(II) For budget year 2000-2001 and budget years thereafter, the amount of funding received by a charter school pursuant to this subsection (2) shall not be less than ninety-five percent of the district per pupil revenues multiplied by the number of pupils enrolled in the charter school or as otherwise provided in paragraph (a.3) of this subsection (2) for any charter school authorized by a school district that enrolls five hundred or fewer students.

(d) It is the intent of the general assembly that funding and service agreements pursuant to this subsection (2) shall be neither a financial

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incentive nor a financial disincentive to the establishment of a charter school.

(e) Fees collected from students enrolled at a charter school shall be retained by such charter school.

(3)(a)(I) For the 1999-2000 budget year, notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, the proportionate share of state and federal resources generated by students with disabilities or staff serving them shall be directed to charter schools enrolling such students by their school districts or administrative units. The proportionate share of moneys generated under other federal or state categorical aid programs shall be directed to charter schools serving students eligible for such aid.

(II) For budget year 2000-2001 and budget years thereafter, if the charter school and the school district have negotiated to allow the charter school to provide federally required educational services pursuant to paragraph (a.8) of subsection (2) of this section, the proportionate share of state and federal resources generated by students receiving such federally required educational services or staff serving them shall be directed by the school district or administrative unit to the charter school enrolling such students.

(III) For budget year 2000-2001 and budget years thereafter, the proportionate share of moneys generated under federal or state categorical aid programs, other than federally required educational services, shall be directed to charter schools serving students eligible for such aid.

(b) If a student with a disability attends a charter school, the school district of residence shall be responsible for paying any tuition charge for the excess costs incurred in educating the child in accordance with the provisions of section 22-20-109 (5).

(4) The governing body of a charter school is authorized to accept gifts, donations, or grants of any kind made to the charter school and to expend or use said gifts, donations, or grants in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the donor; however, no gift, donation, or grant shall be accepted by the governing body if subject to any condition contrary to law or contrary to the terms of the contract between the charter school and the local board of education.

(4.5) Any moneys received by a charter school from any source and remaining in the charter school's accounts at the end of any budget year shall remain in the charter school's accounts for use by the charter school during subsequent budget years and shall not revert to the school district or to the state.

(5) The department of education will prepare an annual report and evaluation for the governor and the house and senate committees on education on the success or failure of charter schools, their relationship to other school reform efforts, and suggested changes in state law necessary to strengthen or change the charter school program.

(6) The department of education will provide technical assistance to persons and groups preparing or revising charter applications.

22-30.5-113 – Charter schools - evaluation - report.

(1) The state board shall compile evaluations of charter schools received from local boards of education. The state board shall review information regarding the regulations and policies from which charter schools were released pursuant to section 22-30.5-105 to determine if the releases assisted or impeded the charter schools in meeting their stated goals and objectives.

(2) Repealed.

(3) In preparing the report required by this section, the state board shall compare the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other public schools who are enrolled in academically comparable courses.

22-30.5-114 – Repeal of part. (Repealed)

22-30.5-115 – Construction of article - severability.

If any provision of this article or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this article that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this article are declared to be severable.

contract, a local board of education may waive locally imposed school district requirements, without seeking approval of the state board. The state board may waive state statutory requirements or rules promulgated by the state board. Upon request of the charter applicant, the state board and the local board of education shall provide summaries of such regulations and policies to use in preparing a charter school application. The department of education shall prepare the summary of state regulations within existing appropriations. Any waiver of state or local school district regulations made pursuant to this subsection (6) shall be for the term of the charter for which the waiver is made; except that a waiver of state statutes or regulations by the state board shall be subject to review every two years and may be revoked if the waiver is deemed no longer necessary by the state board.

(7)(a) A charter school shall be responsible for its own operation including, but not limited to, preparation of a budget, contracting for services, and personnel matters.

(b) A charter school may negotiate and contract with a school district, the governing body of a state college or university, or any third party for the use of a school building and grounds, the operation and maintenance thereof, and the provision of any service, activity, or undertaking that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in its charter. Any services for which a charter school contracts with a school district shall be provided by the district at cost. The charter school shall have standing to sue and be sued in its own name for the enforcement of any contract created pursuant to this paragraph (b).

(c) In no event shall a charter school be required to pay rent for space which is deemed available, as negotiated by contract, in school district facilities. All other costs for the operation and maintenance of the facilities used by the charter school shall be subject to negotiation between the charter school and the school district.

(8) A charter school shall be authorized to offer any educational program that may be offered by a school district unless expressly prohibited by its charter or by state law.

22-30.5-105 – Charter schools - contract contents - regulations.

(1) An approved charter application shall serve as the basis for a contract between the charter school and the local board of education.

(2) The contract between the charter school and the local board of education shall reflect all agreements regarding the release of the charter school from school district policies.

(3) The contract between the charter school and the local board of education shall reflect all requests for release of the charter school from state statutes and regulations. Within ten days after the contract is approved by the local board of education, any request for release from state statutes and regulations shall be delivered by the local board of education to the state board. Within forty-five days after a request for release is received by the state board, the state board shall either grant or deny the request. If the state board grants the request, it may orally notify the local board of education and the charter school of its decision. If the state board denies the request, it shall notify the local board of education and the charter school in writing that the request is denied and specify the reasons for denial. If the local board of education and the charter school do not receive notice of the state board's decision within forty-five days after submittal of the request for release, the request shall be deemed granted. If the state board denies a request for release that includes multiple state statutes or regulations, the denial shall specify the state statutes and regulations for which the release is denied, and the denial shall apply only to those state statutes and regulations so specified.

(4) A material revision of the terms of the contract may be made only with the approval of the local board of education and the governing body of the charter school.

22-30.5-106 – Charter application - contents.

(1) The charter school application shall be a proposed agreement and shall include:

(a) The mission statement of the charter school, which must be consistent with the principles of the general assembly's declared purposes as set forth in section 22-30.5-102 (2) and (3);

(b) The goals, objectives, and pupil performance standards to be achieved by the charter school;

(c) Evidence that an adequate number of parents, teachers, pupils, or any combination thereof support the formation of a charter school;

(d) Repealed.

(e) A description of the charter school's educational program, pupil performance standards, and curriculum, which must meet or exceed any content standards adopted by the school district in which the charter school has applied for a charter and must be designed to enable each pupil to achieve such standards;

(f) A description of the charter school's plan for evaluating pupil performance, the types of assessments that will be used to measure pupil progress towards achievement of the school's pupil performance standards, the timeline for achievement of such standards, and the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that pupil performance at the charter school falls below such standards;

(g) Evidence that the plan for the charter school is economically sound for both the charter school and the school district, a proposed budget for the term of the charter, a description of the manner in which an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the charter school, including any services provided by the school district, is to be conducted, and a plan for the displacement of pupils, teachers, and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the charter school;

(h) A description of the governance and operation of the charter school, including the nature and extent of parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the charter school;

(i) An explanation of the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment have been addressed with affected employees and their recognized representative, if any;

(i.5) The employment policies of the proposed charter school;

(j) An agreement between the parties regarding their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage;

(k) A description of how the charter school plans to meet the transportation needs of its pupils and, if the charter school plans to provide transportation for pupils, a plan for addressing the transportation needs of low-income and academically low-achieving pupils;

(l) A description of the charter school's enrollment policy, consistent with the requirements of section 22-30.5-104 (3), and the criteria for enrollment decisions;

(m) A dispute resolution process, as provided in section 22-30.5-107.5.

(2) No person, group, or organization may submit an application to convert a private school or a non-public home-based educational

program into a charter school or to create a charter school which is a non-public home-based educational program as defined in section 22-33-104.5.

(3) A charter applicant is not required to provide personal identifying information concerning any parent, teacher, or prospective pupil prior to the time that the charter is approved and either the charter school actually employs the teacher or the pupil actually enrolls in the charter school, whichever is applicable. A charter school applicant shall provide, upon request of the school district, aggregate information concerning the grade levels and schools in which prospective pupils are enrolled.

22-30.5-107 – Charter application - process.

(1) A charter applicant cannot apply to, or be granted a charter by, a school district unless a majority of the charter school's pupils will reside in the chartering school district or in school districts contiguous thereto. The local board of education shall receive and review all applications for charter schools. Applications must be filed with the local board of education by October 1 to be eligible for consideration for the following school year. The local board of education shall not charge any application fees. If such board finds the charter school application is incomplete, the board shall request the necessary information from the charter applicant. The charter school application shall be reviewed by the district accountability committee prior to consideration by the local board of education.

(1.5) For purposes of reviewing a charter school application, a district accountability committee shall include at least:

(a) One person with a demonstrated knowledge of charter schools, regardless of whether that person resides within the school district; and

(b) One parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in a charter school in the school district; except that, if there are no charter schools in the school district, the local board of education shall appoint a parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in the school district.

(2) After giving reasonable public notice, the local board of education shall hold community meetings in the affected areas or the entire school district to obtain information to assist the local board of education in its decision to grant a charter school application. The local board of education shall rule by resolution on the application for a charter school in a public hearing, upon reasonable public notice, within seventy-five days after receiving the application filed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. All negotiations between the charter school and the local board of education on the contract shall be concluded by, and all terms of the contract agreed upon, no later than ninety days after the local board of education rules by resolution on the application for a charter school unless the parties mutually agree to waive this deadline.

(2.5) The charter applicant and the local board of education may jointly waive the deadlines set forth in this section.

(3) If a local board of education denies a charter school application or unilaterally imposes conditions that are unacceptable to the charter applicant, the charter applicant may appeal the decision to the state board pursuant to section 22-30.5-108.

(4) If a local board of education denies a charter school application, it shall state its reasons for the denial. If a local board of education grants a charter, it shall send a copy of the approved charter to the department of education within fifteen days after granting the charter.

22-30.5-107.5 – Dispute resolution - appeal.

(1) The charter school and the school district shall agree on a third-party dispute resolution process to resolve disputes that may arise concerning implementation of the charter contract. If the charter school and the school district do not include a third-party dispute resolution process, the state board shall direct the department of education to provide dispute resolution services at the request of the charter school or the school district. The charter school and the school district shall each be responsible for paying one-half of the reasonable costs incurred by the department of education in providing such dispute resolution services. The state board shall establish the amount of such reasonable costs by rule.

(2) If either the charter school or the school district fails or refuses to participate in a dispute resolution process or fails or refuses to comply with the decision reached as a result of the dispute resolution process, such failure or refusal shall constitute an alleged unilateral imposition of conditions that may be appealed to the state board pursuant to section 22-30.5-108 (3).

22-30.5-108 – Appeal - standard of review - procedures.

(1) Acting pursuant to its supervisory power as provided in section 1 of article IX of the state constitution, the state board, upon receipt of a notice of appeal or upon its own motion, may review decisions of any local board of education concerning charter schools in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(2) A charter applicant or any other person who wishes to appeal a decision of a local board of education concerning a charter school shall provide the state board and the local board of education with a notice of appeal or of facilitation within thirty days after the local board's decision. If the appeal is of a denial, nonrenewal, or revocation of a charter, the person bringing the appeal shall limit the grounds of the appeal to the grounds for denial specified by the local board of education. The notice shall include a brief statement of the reasons the charter school applicant contends the local board of education's denial was in error.

(3) If the notice of appeal, or the motion to review by the state board, relates to a local board's decision to deny, refuse to renew, or revoke a charter or to a local board's unilateral imposition of conditions that are unacceptable to the charter school or the charter applicant, the appeal and review process shall be as follows:

(a) Within sixty days after receipt of the notice of appeal or the making of a motion to review by the state board and after reasonable public notice, the state board, at a public hearing which may be held in the school district in which the proposed charter school has applied for a charter, shall review the decision of the local board of education and make its findings. If the state board finds that the local board's decision was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district, or community, the state board shall remand such decision to the local board of education with written instructions for reconsideration thereof. Said instructions shall include specific recommendations concerning the matters requiring reconsideration.

(b) Within thirty days following the remand of a decision to the local board of education and after reasonable public notice, the local board of education, at a public hearing, shall reconsider its decision and make a final decision.

(c) If the local board of education's final decision is still to deny, refuse to renew, or revoke a charter or to unilaterally impose conditions unacceptable to the charter school or the charter applicant, a second notice of appeal may be filed with the state board within thirty days following such final decision.

(d) Within thirty days following receipt of the second notice of appeal or the making of a motion for a second review by the state board and after reasonable public notice, the state board, at a public hearing, shall determine whether the final decision of the local board of education was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district, or community. If such a finding is made, the state board shall remand such final decision to the local board with instructions to approve the charter application. The decision of the state board shall be final and not subject to appeal.

(3.5) In lieu of a first appeal to the state board pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of this section, the parties may agree to facilitation. Within thirty days after denial, nonrenewal, or revocation of a charter by the local board of education, the parties may file a notice of facilitation with the state board. The parties may continue in facilitation as long as both parties agree to its continued use. If one party subsequently rejects facilitation, and such rejection is not reconsidered within seven days, the local board of education shall reconsider its denial, nonrenewal, or revocation of a charter and make a final decision as provided in paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of this section. The charter applicant may file a notice of appeal with the state board as provided in paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of this section within thirty days after a local board of education's final decision to deny, not renew, or revoke a charter.

(4) If the notice of appeal, or the motion to review by the state board, relates to a local board's decision to grant a charter, the appeal and review process shall be as follows:

(a)(I) Within sixty days after receipt of the notice of appeal or the making of a motion to review by the state board and after reasonable public notice, the state board, at a public hearing which may be held in the district in which the proposed charter school has applied for a charter, shall review the decision of the local board of education and determine whether such decision was arbitrary and capricious or whether the establishment or operation of the proposed charter school would:

(A) Violate any federal or state laws concerning civil rights;

(B) Violate any court order;

(C) Threaten the health and safety of pupils in the school district;

(D) Violate the provisions of section 22-30.5-109 (2), prescribing the permissible number of charter schools; or

(E) Be inconsistent with the equitable distribution of charter schools among school districts.

(II) If such a determination is made, the state board shall remand such decision to the local board with instructions to deny the charter application. The decision of the state board shall be final and not subject to appeal.

(5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the requirement that a charter school be a part of the school district that grants its charter and accountable to the local board of education pursuant to section 22-30.5-104 (2).

22-30.5-109 – Charter schools - restrictions - establishment - number.

(1) A local board of education may reasonably limit the number of charter schools in the school district.

(2)(a) No more than sixty charters shall be granted prior to July 1, 1997, and at least sixteen of said sixty charters shall be reserved for charter school applications which are designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk pupils, as defined in section 22-30.5-103.

(b) Local boards of education which grant charter school applications shall report such action to the state board and shall specify whether or not such school is designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk pupils. The state board shall promptly notify the board of education of each school district when the limits specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection (2) have been reached.

(3) It is the intent of the general assembly that priority of consideration be given to charter school applications designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk pupils, as defined in section 22-30.5-103.

(4) If otherwise qualified, nothing in this part 1 shall be construed to prohibit any institution certified as an educational clinic pursuant to article 27 of this title, on or before April 1, 1993, from applying to become a charter school pursuant to this part 1.

(5) Nothing in this part 1 shall be construed to prevent a school in a school district which is comprised of only one school from applying to become a charter school pursuant to this part 1.

(6) A school district shall not discriminate against a charter school in publicizing the district's educational options through advertising, direct mail, availability of mailing lists, or other informational activities, provided that the charter school pays for its share of such publicity at cost.

22-30.5-110 – Charter schools - term - renewal of charter - grounds for nonrenewal or revocation.

(1) A new charter may be approved for a period of at least three years but not more than five academic years. A charter may be renewed for a period not to exceed five years.

(1.5) No later than December 1 of the year prior to the year in which the charter expires, the governing body of a charter school shall submit a renewal application to the local board of education. The local board of education shall rule by resolution on the renewal application no later than February 1 of the year in which the charter expires, or a mutually agreed upon date.

(2) A charter school renewal application submitted to the local board of education shall contain:

(a) A report on the progress of the charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, pupil performance standards, content standards, and other terms of the initial approved charter application; and

(b) A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public and that will allow comparison of such costs to other schools or other comparable organizations, in a format required by the state board of education.

(3) A charter may be revoked or not renewed by the local board of education if such board determines that the charter school did any of the following:

(a) Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter application;

(b) Failed to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the content standards or pupil performance standards identified in the charter application;

(c) Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or

(d) Violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

(4) In addition, a charter may be not renewed upon a determination by the local board of education that it is not in the interest of the pupils residing within the school district to continue the operation of the charter school.

1999 COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS EVALUATION STUDY
DATA MATRIX

School Name: ______________________________

Name and Phone Number of Person Completing the Data Matrix:

____

DATA ITEM	1998-99
STUDENTS Does the school apply any admission criteria? If yes, please describe or attach a copy of the your admissions policy.	
Has the school adopted a discipline policy/code that is different than the one in effect in the sponsoring district?	
Waiting List **(as of end of 1998-99 school year)**	
Percentage of student population that attended home schools, private schools and other public schools before they enrolled in the school	Home School: Private: Other Public:
STATE ACCREDITATION INDICATORS - Please apply the definitions used in the state accreditation law.	
Attendance rate	
Graduation rate	
Dropout Rate	
Basic Literacy Rate	
Percentage of students participating in assessments Percentage of student exempt from taking assessments	
Number of AP courses provided by school	
Number of students who take AP courses / Number of students who pass the AP examine	
Evidence of a safe, civil learning environment	Please attach a narrative description

DATA ITEM	1998-99
GOVERNANCE What is the average tenure of principals/administrators/school directors employed by your school? (Please calculate by dividing number of years your school has been open by the number of principals your school has employed.)	
Salary paid to principal/administrator/school director.	
Total number of years principal/administrator/school director has worked as an administrator (including experience in charter school and other education settings).	
For how many years was your original charter granted?	
Have you completed a process to renew your original charter? If so, please state the term of the renewed charter.	
PARENT INVOLVEMENT Does your school use a required parent contract?	
Total parent hours volunteered	
% or number of parents who volunteer	
Does school regularly administer a parent satisfaction survey?	
FUNDING % of district PPOR your school received from sponsoring district	
For each of the services listed below, please indicate whether your school: 1. Purchases service from third party, 2. Receives service from the sponsoring district as part of the negotiated PPOR rate paid by the district to the school, 3. Purchases service from the sponsoring district, or 4. Does not obtain the service at all.	
Insurance	
Food services	

DATA ITEM	1998-99
FUNDING (cont) Maintenance	
Legal services	
Payroll services	
Accounting/Budget services	
Special education services to students with IEP's	
Professional development services/support	
Transportation services	
Student assessment services	
Surplus furniture, classroom equipment	
Access to district purchasing office	
Facility	
Other	

Special Note to Secondary Schools

Beginning with the 1999 evaluation study, we will report data on ACT/SAT scores for secondary schools. Given the limited scope of CSAP, these scores provide the best (albeit an imperfect) basis for a comparative analysis of student achievement in secondary schools. Please provide the following data:

Data Item	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Average ACT score			
Number of students who took the ACT			
Average SAT score			
Number of students who took the SAT			

1999 COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS EVALUATION
SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Identify the most significant lessons you have learned about how to structure and operate a successful charter school. Think in terms of the advice you would give to someone who is about to embark on this enterprise.

2. What are your school's major needs for technical assistance?

3. (a) Did your school receive federal funds, through CDE, for start-up and implementation? If so, please describe the impact, if any, the grant has had on your school.
(b) Will your school be requesting a dissemination grant from CDE? If yes, please describe the impact, if any, you expect the grant to have on your school.

4. Indicate how your school works with its sponsoring district to provide special education services to students with IEPs.

_____Not at all. The charter school has total responsibility and authority in this regard.

_____The sponsoring district assumes total responsibility and authority in this regard. Please describe the compensation, if any, the school provides to the sponsoring district for this service.

_____The sponsoring district and the school collaborate in this regard. Please describe the structure and nature of the collaboration.

What are the advantages of your approach?

What are the disadvantages, if any?

5. (a) What aspects or characteristics of your school contribute most to your school's success in academics and school climate. (The potential list is long – school philosophy, curriculum, technology program, teacher/student ratio, school size, teacher experience, staff development activities, parent involvement, specific aspects of your school's structure, etc. *Please prioritize the top three* aspects or characteristics.)

(b) What aspects or characteristics of your school contribute most to your school's success in governance and administration.

6. (a). Why do you think charter school parents, as a group, tend to participate in their schools at high levels of involvement?

(b). Please identify specific strategies that your school has used successfully to promote greater parent involvement.

7. The Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 requires sponsoring districts to pass through specified categories (Title I, Goals 2000, Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project, Vocational Education Basic Grants, Tech Prep, Class Size, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Eisenhower Professional Development, Innovative Education Program Strategies, Immigrant Education, Homeless Education, Even Start Family Literacy, Special Education preschool grants and grants to the states) of federal dollars directly to charter schools. Please identify any categories of federal funds included within the scope of the Act that your school is not receiving from the sponsoring district. Please provide the explanation, if any, the sponsoring district has given to explain its practice.